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MONEY MATTERS

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READY FOR ELECTORAL CHALLENGE

WITH the country gearing up for the most open General Election in decades, it is far from clear if our district's incumbent Tory MPs can afford to feel relaxed about their normally 'safe' seats.

The Canterbury constituency, which covers most of the city council area including Whitstable, has consistently voted Conservative since at least 1862, making it the seat held the longest by any party in the country.

ELECTION 2010

BY JENNY ARMSTRONG

Julian Brazier, the incumbent MP, has been in the seat since 1987.

At the 2005 election, the Oxford-educated former Territorial Army officer kept his seat by a massive 15.7 per cent majority of 7,471 votes.

His closest result in recent years was 2001, when he retained the seat with 2,069 more votes than his nearest rivals, Labour.

The picture is similar in Herne Bay, where the North Thanet seat has been

held by Tory Roger Gale since 1983.

Mr Brazier, the shadow minister for transport, escaped relatively unscathed during the expenses scandal and only had to repay mobile telephone costs of less than £250, which he had claimed on the wrong form.

He is being challenged by businesswoman and mum-of-three Jean Samuel for Labour; and Oxford-educated financial journalist Guy Voizey for the Liberal Democrats.

Retired academic Dr Geoff Meaden is standing for the Green Party; tradesman and biodiesel maker Howard Farmer for UKIP; and the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



ALAN'S NEW LEAF

Gardening guru Alan Titchmarsh will visit Canterbury next week to promote his new series of books. He will be in the British Bookshops and Stationers outlet at 14 The Parade between noon and 1pm on Tuesday, to sign the five titles in his 'How to Garden' series. Titchmarsh has penned more than 40 books about gardening, writes for Gardener's World magazine, and is the gardening correspondent for two national newspapers.

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Will's rise to fame was my downfall, says twin Rupert

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

THE alcoholic twin brother of pop star Will Young has revealed how his sibling's rapid rise to fame fuelled his own addiction nightmare.

While Will was winning Pop Idol and performing to sell-out crowds at Wembley Arena, 31-year-old Rupert Young was drink-driving, sleeping rough and – when feeling particularly depressed – slashing his wrists.

However, the man once described as Will's "evil twin" has now been off the bottle for four years and instead directs his energy towards his own mental health charity, the Mood Foundation.

Mr Young spoke about the dangers of drink and drugs when he visited youngsters at the Community College, Whitstable, this week, and described to KOS Media afterwards how his brother's 2002 Pop Idol victory affected his life for the worse.

He said: "It was a massive party and I thought it gave me an excuse to behave badly. I thought it was my ticket to all that was great and fun, when actually I was crashing myself into the world of addiction."

"I was very proud of Will, but I just couldn't understand how he had reached his potential when I couldn't even get out of bed in the morning."

"It was an interesting contrast. I remember sitting drinking lager while he was being interviewed by Richard and Judy."

"But the lure of the spotlight soon became diluted for me really, because it wasn't reality. What's reality is getting up, putting your feet on the floor and having a structure to your day – not running around getting drunk all the time."

"I think I hid away a lot during that time because I didn't want to embarrass him. I was living in a shadow, but not in Will's shadow."



NIGHTMARE: Rupert Young says his brother Will's success fuelled his own addiction



"I didn't want to be seen as the messed-up brother."

Mr Young said he started to drink and self-harm at the age of 12, as a reaction to the physical and emotional abuse he suffered at boarding school.

On numerous occasions since then – including a seven-year stint when he regularly engaged in drink-driving – his family has disowned him, as per his own wishes as an incentive to get back on the wagon.

Relationship

Mr Young said: "Once Will came home after performing in front of a sell-out crowd at Wembley Arena to find me attempting to kill myself. I ended up punching him in the face when he tried to stop me."

"Our relationship is amazing now and he actually comes to me for advice. It must have been so hard for

him to disown me, but I suppose he felt he had to in order to help me."

"By doing it he put the responsibility on me to fix myself, and made it clear that if I was going to look after myself, then my family would help."

The Mood Foundation works to build up a database of private therapists and alternative therapies used to treat various types of depressive conditions.

Working alongside GPs, the charity aims to assess what treatment is best for a person and match them up with the correct therapist.

Lisa Murphy, a counsellor at the Community College, said: "We're taking a proactive approach to drug and alcohol addiction and self-harm, and we brought Rupert in to help raise awareness of these issues."

"He was so open and honest with the students that his words can't have failed to have had an impact."

yourcanterbury

NEWS IN BRIEF

Appeal in search for missing teenager

POLICE are appealing for information about an Aylesham teenager who was last seen on Monday.

Josie Mockett, 18, failed to return to her home in Burgess Road after spending the morning at Canterbury College.

She was last seen there at midday and normally gets the bus home.

Josie is 5ft 6in tall and has short, chin-length, dark, straight hair.

She is of stocky build and was wearing a black cotton Playboy tracksuit, dark pink Mackenzie coat and grey, soft boots.

Anyone with information is urged to call police on 01622 690690 or the Missing People charity on 0500 700 700.

£14,000 price tag on historic tomb model

A MODEL of a tomb in Canterbury cathedral is expected to be sold at auction for £14,000 next week.

The 400-year-old mock-up is made of wood, paper and card and shows the tomb of Dame Mary Thornhurst in St Michael's Chapel.

It is believed to have been a working design as it contains a number of differences to the finished memorial at Canterbury Cathedral.

The 17th century model shows a model of Dame Thornhurst lying on a tomb chest while her husband, who died later, kneels in an arch above.

The work will be sold at Christie's auction house in London on Wednesday, April 14.

Electoral challenge

FROM FRONT PAGE

sented by its founder Anne Belsey. In Herne Bay, Mr Gale kept his seat at the 2005 election with a 17.5 per cent majority of 7,631 votes.

Mr Gale also came out of the expenses scandal relatively unscathed, despite being initially ordered to repay nearly £2,500.

But this decision was overturned and the MP had to repay nothing.

The Herne Bay seat is being contested by retired trade union official and women's rights campaigner Michael Britton for Labour; company director Laura Murphy for the Lib Dems; and retired sound therapist Rosamund Parker for UKIP.

Voter turnout in both districts has dropped: to 66.1 per cent in Canterbury; and 60.1 per cent in Herne Bay, so a strong Labour or Lib Dem vote in either constituency could oust the incumbents.

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Speed camera groups deny vigilante claims

■ BY CHRIS MURPHY

KENT Police have denied they are using Big Brother techniques to clamp down on drivers by handing out speed cameras to communities.

The scheme has been bitterly attacked as promoting neighbourhood vigilantism.

A camera kit has been made available to people in Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay. Now police need volunteers to monitor the speed of traffic in their communities.

The mobile Speedwatch equipment was bought by the Safer Canterbury District Partnership. As cars pass the camera, it measures its speed and flashes it on a roadside sign.

Volunteers will take the vehicle registration number of those exceeding the limit and drivers will receive a warning letter from the police – but there will be no fine or points.

However, if the same drivers persistently speed through the checkpoints, a police patrol will be waiting for them, and that will lead to fines and points on licences.

PCSO Graeme Downes said: "Obviously if this does work, it is something the police would probably spread to a wider area."

"This is for people to use if they think there is a particular problem in their area. It is supposed to primarily be a deterrent, we won't be targeting anyone in particular."

"The people using the equipment will be in high-visibility clothing and there is a large sign which flashes the speed of a vehicle."

"That highlights the fact that a particular



STREET COPS: PCSOs Mike Kean and Graeme Downes show the equipment to PACT member David Hayward

area has a problem and it makes the motorists aware of that and hopefully they will slow down every time they pass through."

Ian Taylor, from the Kent branch of the Association of British Drivers, said: "We don't like speed cameras in general. We don't like this particular type because it puts them in the hands of people who are not well trained, and invites vigilantism. These camera need to be properly calibrated which can be tricky and you can't always trust them to be exact."

"Someone could repeatedly write down the registration number of someone they simply

don't like and cause some problems for them."

Speedwatch is already in operation in the east Kent area where parishes have bought their own equipment.

Insp Terry Chuter of the Canterbury neighbourhood team said: "Excess speed is one of the most common factors contributing to collisions and we are keen to work with local communities who tell us, quite rightly, that it is one of the things that concerns them the most."

For more information contact your local neighbourhood officer by visiting www.kent.police.uk and enter your postcode

Two arrested as police raid village

TWO arrests have been made following an armed police raid in Chislet near Herne Bay last week.

The 10 policemen, as well as three dog handlers, went to the village at 11.15am on Tuesday, March 30 after reports that a man had been assaulted.

A 26-year-old man from Whitstable has received hospital treatment for head injuries which are not thought to be serious.

Chief Insp Martin Cunningham said: "An initial call indicated a firearm had been seen. Inquiries are continuing."

A total of 14 cannabis plants were found at a house in Hollow Lane, Chislet. Police declared the village safe at 2.45pm.

A 48-year-old man and a 44-year-old woman have been arrested on suspicion of assault, possessing a firearm without a certificate and the cultivation of cannabis. They have been released on bail until April 24.

Body on beach was MS sufferer

A BODY was found on the beach at Whitstable early on Thursday morning.

The man, found by a member of the public at 5.40am on April 1, was identified as MS sufferer Darren Crawley, 26.

Mr Crawley, who was from the town, was found above the high water mark near the Kean's Yard car park.

He was last seen at the Wall Tavern pub at Middle Wall in Whitstable at 10.30pm the night before he was found.

Anyone who saw the young man, who walked with a cane, after this time should call them on 01622 690690.

The death is being treated as unexplained. The coroner and Mr Crawley's next of kin have been informed.

Victim of attack punched in face

A TEENAGER was punched on the nose in broad daylight after being followed by a group of youngsters.

The 15-year-old victim was walking down Broad Street in Canterbury with a friend on Friday, March 19.

The pair had been followed by a group of boys and a girl dressed in grey tracksuits. Two people from the group approached the boy and started punching him. The victim defended himself, but suffered a nose bleed.

Anyone who saw what happened should call PC Dan Bartlett on 01227 868 377.

Burglars snatch valuable watch

AN extremely valuable Rolex Oyster diving watch was stolen in a burglary in Canterbury last week-end.

Thieves broke into a house in Old Park Avenue in Canterbury on the night of Saturday, March 20 and also stole a laptop, a games console and other jewellery.

The watch has PJ983966 engraved on its back.

Anyone who is offered the watch should call DS Claire Munday on 01843 222 044 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



SPORTING CHANCE:

PE teacher Chris Wallis with sports pupils Tyler Russell, Kadee Edmonson, Laura Browning, and Alice Trill, with James Brooke, of the school's Gifted and Talented programme

Sports work earns school top award

CANTERBURY High has become the first school in Kent and Sussex to be designated a "centre of excellence" by the Youth Sports Trust.

It is one of only three schools in the country to have been given the award, bestowed because of its work with Gifted and Talented (G&T) students in sport.

Over the last five years the school has been running a Junior Athlete Education programme for people who have great sporting talent.

Children are given help to further their sporting skills while continuing their academic education.

Pupils on the G&T programme are given a mentor who keeps in contact with their parents or guardians,

their teachers and sports coaches.

It has now extended this programme to other areas of the school.

Head Phil Kanavas said: "The idea is to get a significant amount of gifted youngsters into Canterbury High School so they can feed off each other."

"We have also been given a high performing specialist school status by the Department of Schools, Children and Families."

"This will mean we will become a school for developing good practice for applied learning, such as vocational education and apprenticeships, in the area."

Students identified as gifted in sport get an extra hour of PE a week and do their GCSE a year earlier.

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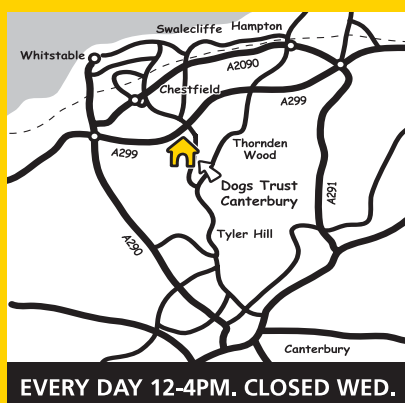
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Recreating the Dunkirk spirit

The tunnels beneath Dover Castle housed the operations centre for the audacious bid to bring stranded Allied troops back from the beaches of Dunkirk in 1940. To mark the 70th anniversary of Operation Dynamo, a re-enactment of the historic event is being held at the castle next month. **NICK AMES** joined rehearsals and discovered how the retreat was still a victory for some of Britain's bravest.

THIS year sees the 70th anniversary of the historic World War Two evacuation of the beaches of Dunkirk when thousands of Allied soldiers were plucked from under the Nazi Germans' guns and shells by an armada of warships, merchant vessels and pleasure craft.

Operation Dynamo, as the evacuation was known, was overseen from underneath Dover Castle. To mark the anniversary the labyrinth of tunnels under the castle will be open to the public as part of a series of events at the castle between May 28 to June 4.

Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay, who was given less than a week to prepare the British escape from northern France, oversaw the operation.

From his headquarters in the tunnels he directed and inspired a small staff, which had the awesome task of planning the evacuation of British and French troops while under constant attack from German forces.

Shelling

By May 26, 1940 Ramsay had assembled 15 passenger ferries at Dover and a further 20 at Southampton.

These it was hoped would be able to embark troops direct from the quays at Dunkirk.

But minefields and shelling from German batteries on the French coast forced evacuation convoys to take longer routes to Dunkirk.

The first convoy, after sustaining heavy air attacks, found the port of Dunkirk with its oil tanks ablaze and only the passenger ferries Royal Daffodil and later the Canterbury succeeded in berthing.

By the end of the first day just 7,500 troops had been rescued and it was clearly impossible to use the port.

Officers on the beaches signalled for the rescue ships to be diverted to the east of the town.



BIG PLAN: Prime Minister Winston Churchill with Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay, who planned the Allied escape

Ramsay knew he needed more seacraft to rescue the troops who were driven back to the Channel by Nazi forces and a plan was quickly drawn up.

In London the Admiralty's Small Vessels Pool had been collecting all available seaworthy pleasure craft.

With volunteer crews, many of whom had never sailed out of sight of land before, they were checked at Sheerness Dockyard and then sent to Ramsgate to await final sailing orders.

There the small boats were joined by a mixture of lifeboats, trawlers, Thames sailing barges and tugs.

The first convoy of little ships set sail from Ramsgate at 10pm on May 29 and by the next day they were streaming across the Channel in seemingly unending lines.

The dangers were great; ships, both large and small, were targets for German fighters, bombers, submarines and coastal batteries plus the random danger of mines which made the crossing unimaginably hazardous.

But the seas remained abnormally calm.

Many smaller craft headed for the beaches acting as tenders, ferrying men from the beaches to larger vessels anchored offshore.

Some of the larger trawlers and drifters loaded troops directly in Dunkirk Harbour.

On the evening of June 2, with the German forces closing in, Ramsay despatched another flotilla of ships, including 13 passenger ships, 14 minesweepers and 11 destroyers.

Only one more night of evacuation was possible. On the night of June 3 a final effort was made using British, French, Belgian and Dutch ships to bring out as many of the French rearguard as possible and more than 26,000 men were saved from the advancing German troops.

About 338,000 troops were rescued from Dunkirk, and almost 200,000 soldiers passed through Dover, Folkestone and Ashford.

During the nine-day operation the Southern Railway laid on a total of 327 special trains, which cleared 180,982 troops from Dover.

A total of 4,500 casualties were treated at the town's Buckland Hospital and all but 50 of these seriously ill men were saved.

During the week of commemorations the castle will be manned by re-enactors in wartime uniforms and costumes, a memorial service will be held, guns will fire in salute and a wreath will be laid.

• To see a video a tour of the tunnels go to www.yourkenttv.co.uk.



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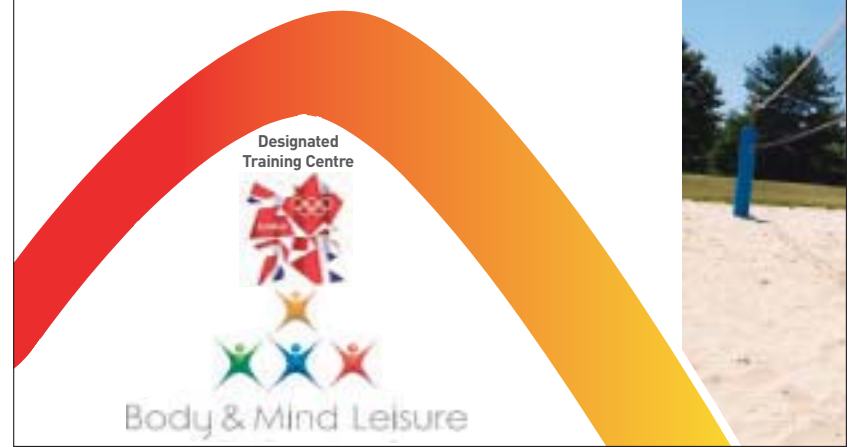
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Five of the very best

■ BY MARIJKE COX

FIVE of the UK's top police officers have been selected as potential candidates for the position of Kent's new Chief Constable.

The hopefuls were chosen from a list of eight applicants by the Kent Police Authority's appointments panel and will now face an intense two-day interview before a final decision in May.

Ann Barnes, chair of the authority, said the selection process for the £150,000-a-year job was "extremely difficult" but believes these candidates have what it takes to fill the role, which was left open following Mike Fuller's move to be HM Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service last month.

Mrs Barnes said the standard of applicants was outstanding, making the task of drawing up the shortlist difficult.

She said: "We had a high number of applicants. Kent is a popular force and this county is like no other when it comes to policing."

Mrs Barnes said the mix of urban and rural communities created real challenges for Kent Police and the Chief Constable.

"This combination means different sorts of policing are needed," she said. "We've also got millions of people coming through the county because of the port and the Channel Tunnel, which can bring so much misery through organised crime."

"Kent is one of the hardest counties to police, so it's vital we choose the right person."

Mrs Barnes said the prospective Chief Constable will be faced with a number of chal-



COP A LOOK: From left - Giles York, Simon Ash, Simon Cole, Alfred Hitchcock, and Ian Learmonth (who is not pictured) make up the shortlist of candidates for the position of Kent Chief Constable

lenges, including financial cuts, with a potential loss of £20 million from the budget during the next few years. But she said the calibre of the applicants filled her with confidence.

"The candidates really understand the challenges of policing this county," she said.

Deputy Chief Constable Adrian Leppard will take on the job temporarily until the position is filled at the beginning of August.

Mr Leppard had been expected to apply for the role permanently after Kent Police Authority said it would seek an exemption to rules which state a senior officer who has been deputy and assistant chief constable is unable to apply for the top job at the same force.

But Mrs Barnes confirmed Mr Leppard, who missed out on the Chief Constable position at Norfolk in January, did not apply. However, he said he was delighted to be appointed the role of temporary Chief Constable.

"There are exciting and challenging opportunities ahead, including our ongoing commitment to listen to the people of Kent and Medway and deal with the issues that really matter to them," he said.

THE SHORTLIST

- Giles York, 43, is Deputy Chief Constable of Sussex Police. He started his career in Kent in 1990 and has served as area commander of Medway, and head of Special Branch at Kent Police.
- Ian Learmonth, 52, is Deputy Chief Constable of Norfolk Police. He has been a police officer since 1976 and served at two other UK police forces before joining Norfolk.
- Simon Ash, 49, is Chief Constable of Suffolk Police. He began his career at Kent Police in 1982.
- Simon Cole, 43, is Deputy Chief Constable for Hampshire Police. He joined Hampshire in 2003 as Assistant Chief Constable having served in West Midlands Police since 1988.
- Alfred Hitchcock, 51, from Lancashire, is Deputy Chief Constable and head of the National College of Police Leadership and National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA). He has more than 30 years' experience in policing.

THE chair of the Kent Police Authority has admitted she was disappointed that only one woman applied for the job of Chief Constable.

Ann Barnes, pictured right, said it showed the force was still a male-dominated profession and confessed she had hoped more female officers would have applied.

"Only one woman went for the job and she didn't make the shortlist," she said. "I was disappointed there were not more female candidates. Unfortunately there are very few women in senior positions. There has never been a female chief constable at Kent Police."

Mrs Barnes said she has been working towards improving the progression of women within the force. In 2006, a gender strategy group was set up to address the matter.

But Mrs Barnes admitted that to go for the chief constable job, the candidate would have to have completed a Senior Command Course, which is only available for officers at chief superintendent level, of which there is only one woman in Kent Police. Currently, there are 1,036 female officers - with the highest-ranking officer being Detective Chief Superintendent Debbie Doe.

Mrs Barnes said: "Women can reach these levels, but progression is tough."

"The situation is improving. We now have more women going through the promotion barriers so we are cracking the obstacles."

"We've taken positive action to change the situation and I think it is working."

Before leaving his position as chief constable, Mike Fuller said a modern, responsive police service needs a range of opinions and experience that only a balanced workforce can provide.

"Since 1978, we have increased the number of female officers by more than 350 per cent," he said. "Women work across a variety of roles in the force, such as forensics, emergency response, firearms and investigation."



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QUESTION & ANSWER

ED WALDEN



Q Tell us a little about yourself

A I was brought up in South Wales, and left school at 16. I joined the Royal Navy, serving for seven years. I subsequently joined British Transport Police (BTP) and now have 16 years of service with the force under my belt. I've also been an officer with Gwent Police as well as the New Zealand Police.

I have been married for five years and my wife and I moved to Kent after I was promoted to Inspector in December 2008 and relocated to Ashford.

Q Tell us a little bit about British Transport Police.

A Including myself there are 25 police officers and four detectives based at Ashford BTP station and we police 110 railway stations throughout Kent. Crime at the stations we police is down some eight per cent on last year – not only are offences down, but we are actually making more arrests and solving more of those crimes that do occur. The figures show the railway is a very safe environment and the chances of becoming a victim of crime are very low.

Q How did you come to work for BTP?

A I became interested in the police service while serving in the Royal Navy in 1993. BTP held a recruitment seminar in Plymouth,

where I was based and I realised it was a career that would give me some really good prospects, where I could use the skills I'd gained in the Royal Navy. Six months later, I joined as a police officer.

Q What's the difference between you and Home Office police forces?

A BTP is the national police force for the railways, providing a police service to passengers, rail operators and their staff throughout England, Scotland and Wales. We have 2,835 police officers and 1,455 support staff and work closely with our colleagues from Home Office forces and the train operating companies, including Southeastern.

Q Do you have different training?

A We undergo the same thorough training as the Home Office forces to ensure that we are fully-trained in upholding the law. However, working for BTP also requires good knowledge of the rail network and the unique issues that come with policing it.

Q What's the best bit of your job?

A I enjoy being able to do something that directly improves life for Kent's rail commuters. Increasing passenger safety and seeing dangerous people being taken off the streets is what it's all about for us.

Q What's the worst?

A The most difficult part of the job is dealing with the death on the railway. It's a particularly hard and a traumatic experience for everyone involved, having to inform a family after the death of a loved one.

Q How would someone go about becoming a BTP officer?

A I would advise anyone thinking about becoming a police officer to consider the BTP. There is scope to work nationally and in many specialist areas. Visit our recruitment website at www.btprecruitment.com.

Q What do you do in your spare time?

A I enjoy travelling a lot, getting outdoors and camping. I also like to cook – I think it's an important skill to have and I take a lot of my culinary inspiration from the different countries I've visited.

Q Which place do you want to visit most in the world and why?

A I would really like to visit Canada as I have heard so many good things about the country from family and friends who have visited. It's one of the few places I haven't yet got around to visiting and I hope to do so this summer.

Inspector Ed Walden is in charge of policing at Kent's 110 railway station. Here the county's most senior British Transport Police officer talks to **Jill Hurst** about the best and worst aspects of his job

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GOING... GOING... GONE: The end of the massive chimney stacks near the Lafarge Cement were demolished as well-placed explosives were detonated by demolition experts last week

Chimneys sent tumbling to make way for regeneration

■ BY CHRIS MURPHY

THIS is the moment Kent's skyline changed forever.

Two massive chimney stacks were brought crashing to the ground with the detonation of a pair of well placed explosives.

The chimneys were each 550ft tall and came down in seconds last weekend.

As the crowds watched and cheered, they toppled into clouds of dust while several

hoses pumping hundreds of gallons of water onto the debris battled to keep the fallout to a minimum.

The demolition took place at the Lafarge Cement site in Northfleet, near Gravesend.

For two glorious centuries the towers had lorded it over the region, and yet they tumbled into the earth in almost the blink of an eye.

It was the biggest demolition project in Europe for some time, and now the site will become part of a grand redesign of the area.

Lafarge is turning the site into a mixed-use development that will include new homes,

shops and a riverside promenade – a far cry from the heavy industry for the past 200 years.

The firm also has plans to build an aggregates import terminal at the former cement works, which shut in 2008. This part of the project will create around 100 new jobs for the area.

Company spokesman David Simms said: "We have a clear vision for the future of the site to reconnect the existing Northfleet community with the riverside; revitalise a range of employment opportunities in the area and regenerate formerly derelict land to the benefit of new and existing communities."

Sanctioned patients kept against their will

MENTAL health patients in Kent are sometimes detained against their will because they do not realise they are allowed to leave, says a new report.

Some patients who voluntarily enter the county's hospitals for treatment are locked in with patients who are not allowed the leave, because for example they have been sectioned.

The findings were made by the Care Quality Commission – England's health and social care regulator – which has now ordered the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust to make urgent improvements to its working practices or face tougher enforcement action.

CQC regional director Roxy Boyce said: "The trust has been working on improvements since our inspections this year, but CQC has put a condition on its registration because we have not yet seen enough evidence to convince us our concerns have been fully resolved."

The social care partnership trust provides services across Kent and Medway with a main focus on mental health. It also helps people with learning disabilities and substance misuse problems from more than 260 sites across the county.

Linda Leonard – chief executive of the Sevenoaks branch of the mental health charity Mind – said patients needed to be given more information about what they can and cannot do.

She said: "It's important because it concerns people's rights. It's about making sure patients have the right information."

According to the CQC, the trust must revise its informal leave policy for non-detained patients and provide evidence of this from May 1. It must also ensure members of staff are fully-trained to deal with the revised policy by June 1.

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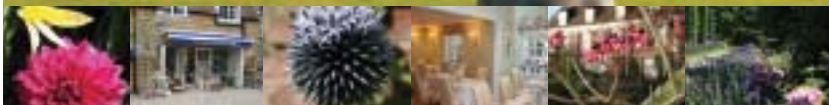
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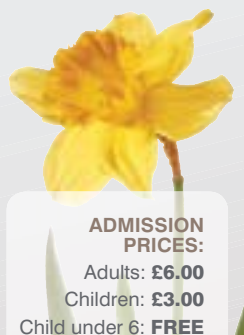
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Songbird's DNA secrets

WHY did the chicken cross the road?

Because scientists had already sequenced its DNA and it wanted to meet the zebra finch, which now joins it as the only other bird to undergo the research.

Darren Griffin, professor of genetics at the school of biosciences at the University of Kent, is among an international group to have mapped the small bird's genome.

The chicken was completed in 2004 and scientists say this new work will help them better understand how humans work.

The research was published in Nature magazine. The team said the work offers an opportunity to understand the human brain during learning and memory, as well as other features such as immunity and fertility. It will also reveal the genetics underpinning some of the uniquely fascinating

■ BY CHRIS MURPHY

traits of birds, such as plumage and song. It was no straightforward task, though.

Teams from across the USA, Europe and the Middle East, including seven UK-based research groups, contributed to the project.

Prof Griffin said: "One of our key findings was the genetic basis of a lot of the variation between chickens and zebra finches.

"Clearly the two birds are very different, but evidence had suggested their genomes were actually very similar. In fact, we now have a clear idea of why this is not the case.

"The chicken was a great start for genomic studies because of the agricultural and embryology angle.

"In evolution, chickens are a bit out on a limb and the zebra finch is a much better representative of the majority of birds.

From here, we can use the information and tools we have developed to study many aspects of bird evolution and ecology."

The teams said zebra finches and other songbirds have one important thing in common with humans: they learn how to converse with one another. Chickens do not demonstrate this, so a comparison between the zebra finch and chicken genomes helped to identify where the genes involved in vocal learning are located.

It has been known for a while that listening to songs affects genes in the brain of a zebra finch.

This project has shown there are also important changes in what the genome actually produces when a young male zebra finch first learns his song from an adult tutor.



SMALL WONDER: Prof Darren Griffin with zebra finch

Fair boost to Bobby Moore fund

FOOTBALL fans have the chance to buy a piece of history while helping to raise money for a good cause.

A memorabilia fair, which includes programmes and badges, has so far raised more than £400 for the Bobby Moore Fund.

Organiser Simon Randall, from Maidstone, is returning to Folkestone Invicta's Buzzlines Stadium, in Cheriton Road, to add to the fund, set up in memory of the 1966 World Cup-winning captain.

One of England's greatest sporting heroes, Bobby Moore was capped 108 times, captained his country a record 90 matches and also won the FA Cup, the European Cup Winners' Cup and was named Footballer of the Year.

The defender played his club football for West Ham and Fulham over a career which spanned more than two decades. He was awarded the OBE in 1967.

His death in 1993, at the age of 51, from bowel cancer, led his widow Stephanie to set up the fund as part of Cancer Research UK and has raised over £12 million and funded



GOLDEN MEMORY: Bobby Moore lifts World Cup

36 projects across the UK.

The fair is in Folkestone Invicta's Stripes Bar on Sunday, from 11am to 2pm.

Entrance is 50p for adults, free for children, and there will also be a raffle.

Border Agency court challenge on 'unlawful' child interviews

YOUNG asylum-seekers detained at Dover are being denied basic care during "unlawful" interviews with customs officers, claims a new report.

The Refugee and Migrant Justice (RMJ) charity says many children are refused food, rest and medicine until after they have completed "oppressive" grillings with UK Border Agency (UKBA) staff.

In its report - Safe at Last? Children on the Front Line of Border Control - the organisation also alleges young migrants do not have access to legal or adult representatives, nor translators.

Chief executive Caroline Slocock said: "Unaccompanied children arrive hungry, cold and often ill, having travelled for months in great danger.

"Their welcome is an interview by the UK Border Agency that often puts welfare at risk and is used to gather information that is later used against them.

"Such interviews - carried out without independent adult or legal representation, and sometimes without the right interpreters - are unacceptable. Children should not be treated in this way."

RMJ says it first raised concerns about the 'illegal' interviews in March, 2009, when its Does Every Child Matter? report alleged the UKBA was failing to protect the welfare

of young asylum-seekers, as set out in the agency's own code of practice. The charity claims at least 20 interviews take place every month involving children as young as 12, but says the figure could be higher.

Mrs Slocock said: "They say the interviews are intended to help protect children, but unacceptable treatment continues. Children seeking asylum should be given care first. We are taking this to the courts, but in the meantime the interviews should stop."

RMJ has applied to the High Court requesting a judicial review of the interviews, and on their use in the decision-making processes that later affect a child's asylum claim.

UKBA strategic director for protection Hugh Ind said it was not true youngsters were denied basic needs such as rest, food or medicine. He said: "We have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and we take this very seriously.

"To ascertain a child's welfare we need to speak to them and an initial interview is necessary. We will continue to ensure vulnerable children are referred to welfare agencies or the police as soon as possible.

"Our staff and interpreters have clear guidance on how to conduct interviews and comply with a code of conduct."

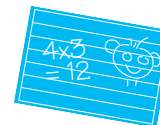


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The only stipulation is that the maximum dimensions do not exceed 56 x 45 x 25 cm.



BREAK TIME

Young players train with rugby legend

SPIRES pupils met rugby star Lawrence Dallaglio at a special training session at the Wasps' training ground in Acton in March.

The students watched the team's 1st XV training and joined the rugby legend for a lesson in passing and tackling.

Year 8 pupil Henry Lee, 12, said: "I had never played rugby before today, but I have learned loads and now I love it!"

Former England rugby captain Dallaglio was a member of the 2003 side which won the world cup, and he has played for his country 85 times.

Spires Academy sponsor Gerry Pack, founder of Holiday Extras, bought the training session at a charity auction.

Try Angle awards

CHILDREN who always do their best can now be nominated for a Try Angle Award to recognise their effort.

Organisers of the awards urge anyone who knows a young person who deserves to have their efforts rewarded to complete a nomination form before April 24.

Call Denise Young on 01227 284417 or email denise.young@kent.gov.uk for details.

Road safety lesson

FIRE engines, police cars and ambulances visited Herne Junior School recently.

Kent County Council community safety warden for Herne and Broomfield, Tom Daley, organised the event to teach the children about road safety.

Pupils meet challenges to raise £5,000 for charities

■ BY JENNY ARMSTRONG

ARCHBISHOP'S School pupils raised £5,000 on a 24-hour charity challenge last week.

Small teams of sixth-form students were challenged to reach a specific destination, carry out a series of tasks and get back to the school within a day and a night.

They were not allowed to spend any of their own money while on their challenge.

One group had to get to Plymouth, another to Cambridge, and one group managed to cycle to London and back, a distance of 160 miles using safer back routes, in the 24 hours.

The adventure saw teams trying to find famous people by waiting at the stage door of theatres, trying to get into radio and television studios and raising money as they went.

Colin Whitaker, a teacher at the school, said: "The race is an excellent test of the students' resourcefulness, resilience and stamina. It is fun and we raise a lot for local and international charities much in need of funds."

Pupils were raising money for the Kajekeli Education Trust, the Teenage Cancer Trust, The Scrine Foundation, Demelza House and Ronald McDonald House.

When they arrived safely back at the school on Saturday, they all got a big English breakfast courtesy of the school.

Michael Liddicoat, the school's headmaster, said: "The pupils did extremely well to raise so much money. They were given a set of challenges to complete, one of which was to get a photograph of themselves with a celebrity."



SUPER POWERS: Flying may not have been an option for this team of girls who completed their charity tasks

"One group ran down a street shouting 'Doctor Who!' when they spotted Christopher Ecclestone, who posed for a photo with them."

"Others waited outside the BBC hoping to see people going in and out, which they did."

"They all managed to get back safely and they certainly looked tired on the Saturday

morning when they arrived back for breakfast. "The pupils were a real credit, not just to the school, but to other young people, raising money for those less fortunate."

The school covered the health and safety aspects and filled in risk assessments for the pupils.

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YOUR LETTERS

Open day a reminder centre is still here

I'm writing in the hope you can be of assistance to the Open Centre, as you have been in the past.

We have now been operating for six months as a day centre, but are encountering people (members of the public and staff at other agencies) who seem to think that we are not operating any longer.

To this end we are holding an Open Day at the centre to raise public awareness of the work we do. This is on the May 5 and I have attached copies of the invitation letters. There will be presentations by staff, specialist staff and volunteers and refreshments will be provided.

We hope to encourage as many people as possible from the local community to visit the centre and find out about what we do.

I would also like to ask for your assistance with another matter. The Scrine has been responsible for running the Canterbury Youth Project for a number of years. This was a youth club ran from our building at 37 Wincheap.

During last year's reorganisation we were forced to sell this property in order to continue running a homeless service at the Open Centre. This meant that the youth project had to go into a temporary hiatus because, although we still have the building in Station Road East, for a number of reasons this is not a suitable venue for a youth club. Since the sale of the building we have been seeking, in vain, for a suitable venue.

As an organisation we are fully committed to a vital local community service and would be grateful for any assistance you can offer.

Please feel free to contact myself, Ewan Flack (eflack@scrine.org) or our youth team leader Katie Snow (kss3@kent.ac.uk).

Terry Gore
Assistant General Manager, The Open Centre

Councillor failed to allay housing fears

South Canterbury witnessed yet another full capacity meeting on March 24, when Councillor John Gilbey addressed the AGM of Hilltop Community Association at St Faith's Hall, New House Lane. The depth of opposition to the council's option of large-scale development in the area was reflected in the turnout at the meeting. Of the 800 responses the council received during the LDF consultation period, more than 100 came from the Hilltop area.

In his address, Mr Gilbey blamed central government for imposing such large housing demands on the city, dismissed Hersden as an unviable option for development and said that development at Wincheap was off the agenda in the current economic climate. He also claimed he had no reason for wishing to upset local residents and

your blogger

Each week we get a mystery writer to air their views on living in and around Canterbury...



IF PUBLIC interest in politics was displayed as a pie chart, it would consist of just one colour and be labelled with a giant thumbs down.

The widespread belief that MPs and would-be replacements are all stereotypical soundbite-belching, back-stabbing, policy-pinching politicians has led to widespread voter apathy, with turnout at the polls steadily declining.

Apart from the odd exposé on second home fiddles or MPs' sex and fetish-related sleaze story, politics rarely captures the public's imagination.

But every so often all the right ingredients come together to propel politics up in the interest stakes, sending Question Time ratings through the roof.

Such a time in almost upon us – the General Election is just around the corner. Importantly, there's no clear favourite in the race for Number 10.

In the one corner we have red-rosette-wearing Scot Gordon Brown and in the other his blue counterpart David 'call me Dave' Cameron.

The days when Tony Blair would walk it without breaking a sweat are gone. This is a proper head-to-head race. And that makes it exciting for us.

We can watch the heavyweight political rivals shout, tease, provoke and point at each other during a heated Prime Minister's Questions.

As things stand, this election is practically teetering on the edge of being settled behind the Houses of Parliament bike shed.

If there is a story in your area you think we should be covering contact the editor, **Gareth Arnold**, on 01303 817025 or email him on the details above. If you want to be the next Canterbury blogger then all you have to do is submit an article to us (of around 550 words) and email it to the editor. And don't forget, for all the latest news and video from your town log-on to www.yourcanterbury.co.uk.

held out the prospect of an incoming Conservative government changing the planning system to give power back to local Government.

Professor Clive Church, chairman of HIMN – the Hilltop, Iffin, Merton and New House Lanes Action Group, said that despite Mr Gilbey's bravura performance, the audience was unconvinced by his arguments.

Despite Mr Gilbey's claims nothing has yet been decided, people remain convinced that the council will favour the giant development option because a developer already owns the land, so the council can meet much of its housing target in one place. It is an easy option for the council, but would be a shameful loss of landscape, of highly productive land and of one of South Canterbury's most important areas for leisure and recreation.

People feel that the council should have done a great deal more work on many crucial issues before going to public consultation. We are dealing here with matters that will affect Canterbury for generations, yet the council has gone out to consultation without the evidence to support its case.

Mr Gilbey said he does not want to see greenfield land developed. If he really wants to minimise the loss of agricultural land, finding a solution to Wincheap and developing Hersden are the obvious routes to follow. We recognise some greenfield land is likely to be lost to developers, but the people of the city have a right to expect its leaders to be more consistent and

imaginative in their thinking if they are to convince people of their arguments.

Mr Gilbey's argument that an incoming Conservative government will quickly change the planning rules in Canterbury's favour is only credible if the country elects a Conservative government, which is far from certain and not something over which local voters have any significant control. When new governments come into office their priorities often change and Mr Gilbey may be holding out a false hope to the people of South Canterbury that a change in government will save the city from the council's LDF.

Also attending the meeting were Liberal Democrat Councillors Alex Perkins and Nick Eden Green and representatives from residents' groups at Nackington, South Canterbury and Ashford Road.

???Name, address???

Hidden obsessions

Dr Peter Gardner is correct about the prevalence and great benefits of the sub-group Asperger's Syndrome in medical, scientific, research, cataloguing, maths, computing and engineering.

Volkmar and Bailey (1998) found using strict diagnostic research that parents (20 per cent fathers, five per cent mothers) and relatives of diagnosed children also have it. From my experience I know that AS, a lifelong disadvantage, is also

Battle lines have well and truly been drawn, from Westminster to the farthest reaches of the UK.

MPs in marginal constituencies are working their socks off to hold on to their seats while prospective candidates are working just as hard to snatch them away. Look outside your house/office/train now. I'll bet within ten minutes you'll be able to spot a campaigner canvassing for your vote.

And they'll do anything to get you on side. So why not see what they're willing to offer in return for your X against their name when you go to the polls.

Your support is surely worth at least a Mars bar? Or perhaps you can convince your MP to hop on one leg in return for your vote? It's worth a go.

And when our MPs and wannabe-MPs are not out door-knocking, they're back at HQ desperately seeking some dirt to fling at their opposition. It's like watching Trisha.

"He'll raise taxes ... and he supports ID cards," one MP's press release could potentially scream.

"No I won't ... and no I don't, they're lying. Besides his party wants to hand over power to Brussels," comes the ever-escalating response.

So I urge you, pay attention and get involved.

Once the election is over the boring status quo will soon be restored. That is until the next scandal is spread across the tabloids.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

a problem to spouses who married unaware of the disorder.

BBC TV's Autistic Me programme followed a family where the AS son was violent to his father and family. Dr Gardner says genuine interventions, not illusory ones, are required. However, therapy to reduce obsessive interests does not work unless constantly reinforced.

I used to attend all-parliamentary committee meetings for autism and Asperger's where several members displayed typical signs of AS themselves, and were likely to have children or parents with AS.

I suggest all MPs, ministers, judges, academics and top civil servants, if screened, would reveal a higher than average proportion with AS, a pervasive condition that needs ongoing repetition of instructions due to the obstinately inflexible nature of such individuals.

Rita Grootendorst



Weigh out of line

This is a very difficult issue for people of size. What has been missing from much of the discussion is the human element. We can argue over health and economics, policy and politics, but the reality is in America and all

over the world, there are millions of large people who wish to live productive lives in societies that condemn them based on their size.

There are no easy answers and quick fixes, either for weight issues or accommodations. But while we are debating, it seems only logical that we support all of these people to be productive members of society – not ostracised and not prohibited from contributing. There is a destructive irony in these discussions; while arguing over whether people of size are a burden, we limit their contribution and productivity.

That makes no sense, politically or economically. Whatever a person's size, it only makes sense to support active participation in all aspects of life, free from limiting prejudice.

Rebecca Weinstein

Pensions go Green

Kent Green Party supports a major shift in public spending to secure a state pension of £170 per week and a better future for older people.

This new Green policy is based upon the party's endorsement of the Pensioners' Manifesto produced by the National Pensioners' Convention, one of the largest campaigning organisations for pensioners' rights in the UK.

The Greens are the only one of the main four parties to support their campaign. The Green Party supports a non-means-tested £170 per week, as well as free social care for all who need it, as is offered in Scotland.

Adding to the incomes of poor households would mean both more saving and some more spending in local shops. The figure of £170 per week is calculated as the minimum required to keep the basic state pension above the official poverty line, according to the National Pensioners' Convention.

The convention has called upon all parties to sign up to their manifesto, which calls for a range of measures to improve conditions for older people.

None of the other major parties have signed up to date.

The Green Party also supports an end to the fixed retirement age, meaning many pensioners might continue working beyond retirement. By doing so, they would continue to contribute tax and national insurance, helping to keep down the actual costs of the new pension level.

Steve Dawe, Green Party

The burning issue

Storing large amounts of flammable material such as newspapers and cardboard can pose a substantial fire risk to your home.

Our advice is to keep such items to a minimum to help reduce the chances of fire.

Kent Fire and Rescue Service is also urging people to be good citizens and offer to help other family members, especially older people, dispose of any household rubbish they have accumulated.

Stuart Skilton, head of community fire safety, Kent Fire and Rescue Service

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LEISURE 16-18

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DAY & NIGHT

Concert for church fund

TWO talented performers will be giving a fund-raising concert at the Herne Bay United Church at 7.30pm on Saturday.

Soprano Anne Gardener and pianist Carol Anne Wells present A Song In My Heart, a selection of songs from folk to Broadway. Tickets cost £7, with proceeds going to the church's organ fund. To book call 01227 366322/374776.

Book up for coach trips

AN EXCITING programme of coach trips from Faversham is being offered by Sweet Scene Trips.

On April 17, join a tour of BBC Television Centre and Westfield shopping centre. A trip to Sluis in Holland is offered on May 9 and a two-night break to the Edinburgh Tattoo departs on August 19. Call 01795 535293 for details.

Church hosts folk band

FOLK group Quorum will be performing at St Mary the Virgin Church in Willesborough on Saturday.

Enjoy an evening of live music from Brian 'Trooper' Hawes, Mick Waite, Geoff Hutchinson and Ted Bishop.

The concert starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £5 on the door. Wine and soft drinks will be available.

Bugs' life at museum

DISCOVER the wonder of nature with the Powell-Cotton Museum's Bugs in the Garden event.

Children can look at habitats, try pond-dipping and collect specimens at the museum at Quex Park, Birchington. The event runs until Friday and again from Monday to next Friday. For details visit www.quexamuseum.org.

Learn to make bunting

FAMILIES are invited to make colourful bunting to decorate Herne Bay at free workshops this week.

Run by Animate, the sessions will be held at St Philip Howard Catholic School today, Herne Bay Junior School on Thursday and Herne Junior School on Friday. Places are limited so book by calling 01227 811800.

Jazz band in comeback

LIVE jazz can be enjoyed at The Grand in Folkestone on Thursday when the Pete Abbott Group returns.

The band, featuring Abbott, Mike Austin, Andy Wall, Roger Jeffery and Claire Harris, will perform in Keppels Music Room from 8.30pm. Admission is £5. To book seats, call 01303 277175.

Biggins goes to the ball

CHRISTOPHER Biggins will be the special guest auctioneer at Demelza House's May Ball this year.

Held at Eastwell Manor near Ashford on May 15, the event will raise funds for the children's hospice. Guests will enjoy Champagne and a three-course dinner.

Tickets cost £100. Call 01795 845204, email sarah.taylor@demelza.org.uk or visit www.demelza.org.uk.

Blowers sure to bowl you over

HENRY BLOFELD

Saturday, April 10
Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury



SPEND an evening with one of Britain's great characters when Henry 'Blowers' Blofeld returns to Kent.

With his wicked sense of humour and ability to poke fun at every aspect of life, Blofeld has become one of the most beloved figures in broadcasting. In his new show, Caught Short and Grumpy, the cricket commentator talks about everything from sport, writing and food to political correctness and the European Union.

Fans can look forward to a hilarious evening in the company of this self-confessed 'stuffy old fart' as he tells amusing anecdotes from his long career and offers his opinion on all the frustrations of 21st century life.

Whether grouching about the disappearance of old-fashioned light bulbs or making fun of himself as usual, Blofeld has a real talent for blending common sense with his own ridiculous humour and the result is highly entertaining.

Never afraid to turn his insightful wit on his own absurdities, Blofeld loves to mock pomposity and tease anyone who takes themselves a bit too seriously. Find out more about his fascinating life and grumpy opinions in this funny and charming show.

Blofeld has been the voice of BBC radio's Test Match Special for nearly 40 years, and fans have grown to love his distinctive brand of commentary, which regularly wanders from the action to comment on what else is happening in the vicinity. Renowned for his idiosyncratic style, Blofeld is one of British sport's most cherished contributors.

Last year, a multitude of stars took part in his 70th birthday celebrations at London's Royal Albert Hall, highlighting the fond way in which sports fans view this funny and original commentator.

But his stage show is not just for cricket fans – Blofeld talks about his remarkable life and invites the audience to ask questions about anything they like. From Shakespeare to Le Carre, from space travel to sport, Blofeld is ready for anything and his answers are sure to be illuminating.

Growing up in the Norfolk countryside, Blofeld had an old-fashioned childhood during which he had little to do with his parents. The family name was immortalised in Ian Fleming's James Bond books, as the author was a friend of Blofeld's father and decided to bestow the name on 007's arch enemy.

The younger Blofeld's interest in cricket began while he was being educated at Eton and Cambridge, but he was originally destined for a career in finance. After spending three years training to be a merchant banker, he decided he hated it and became a journalist instead. This new career proved more success-



ful and he started working on the Times and became a freelancer for the Guardian. During his long career, he has written for most of the major newspapers and still writes a popular cricket column for the Daily Express.

But his true vocation was discovered in the 60s when the BBC asked him to record a trial cricket commentary. The experiment revealed an exciting new voice that would become a long-term star of their commentary team and

enhance the listening experience.

Over the years Blofeld has revealed himself to be a skilled entertainer, as well as a commentator, and his live shows have proved incredibly popular as people flock to hear the opinions of this broadcasting legend.

The show starts at 7.45pm and tickets cost £17.50/£15.50. To book call the box office on 01227 769075 or visit the website at www.gulbenkiantheatre.co.uk.



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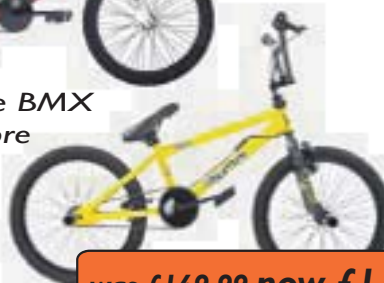
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THE BAND OF THE BRIGADE OF GURKHAS

Thursday, April 8 to Saturday, April 10,
The Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover



ENJOY some outstanding music at the annual festival by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Now in its 11th year, the fund-raising event offers audiences the chance to hear wonderful music performed by remarkable musicians. This year the band will be joined by West Country singer Tim Pitman, who has recently performed at the Birmingham Military Tattoo.

Other highlights include performances by local singer Rebecca Robinson and London Symphony Orchestra violinist Christine Townsend, who is a

professor of violin at Kneller Hall, the headquarters of the British Army Band Service.

The performance will include a rendition of the haunting theme from Schindler's List. Pipers from the Battalion of the Royal Gurkha Rifles will also be performing during the festival, which takes place in the Nye Hall.

This year, proceeds from the festival will be donated to Help for Heroes. Concerts start at 7.45pm and tickets cost £12/£10. To book call 01304 366337 or visit www.gurkhafestivalofmusic.co.uk.



THE SKINTS

Friday, April 9, Westcoast, Margate



MUSIC fans can enjoy an evening rich in great music when The Skints visit Thanet later this week.

Formed in 2005, the band from London was put together by a group of teenagers who took their inspiration from ska-punk acts like King Prawn and Capdown. As they began to create their own sound however, they drew on more rootsy influences like Augustus Pablo and Max Romeo.

Over the last year, The Skints have performed a number of headline shows and supported the likes of The King Blues, The Slackers and The Aggrolites.

Hey Rudi are sure to fill the dance floor when they provide the main support, as the Kent-based band knows how to belt out great covers of hits by Madness and The Specials.

The event will be a very special occasion for One Letter Better, who make their live debut on Friday. Comprised of second year Canterbury Christ Church University students and the drummer from Medway band, Tyrannosaurus Alan the band will be proving their ska-rock credentials with the opening 20-minute set.

Doors open at 7.30pm and tickets cost £3.

MAX MILLER, THE CHEEKY CHAPPIE

Saturday, April 10, Memorial Theatre, Broadstairs



FROM the public persona to the private man, Max Miller's life and work is explored in a highly entertaining stage show.

From the 1930s to the 1950s, Miller was one of Britain's most popular comedians and became the country's highest paid variety star.

Rising from his humble beginnings in Brighton, the Cheeky Chappie became hugely successful and was renowned for his ability to hold audiences in the palm of his hand.

On stage, he was a larger than life character who dressed to impress and was not afraid to blow his own trumpet, as his comic genius was clear for all to see. But in private, he was a quiet man who preferred to stay away from the glitter of show business.

Dave Sealey presents an evening of nearly clean laughter, presenting Miller's saucy humour in authentic style, while also revealing something of the man behind the bravado.

The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £10 for Sarah Thorne Theatre Club members or £12 for non-members, who must book at least 24 hours in advance. To book call 0845 262 6263 or email info@sarahthorne-theatreclub.co.uk to reserve seats.



CRAFT IN FOCUS 2010

Friday, April 6 to Sunday, April 11, Kent College, Canterbury

DISCOVER the country's best artists and craftsmen when Craft in Focus returns to Canterbury.

Widely considered among the best events of its kind, Craft in Focus exhibits work by leading craftsmen from across the country. Everything is made in the UK and offers a different experience for shoppers who are looking for something new, whether on the hunt for a special gift or a unique piece for their home.

From sculpture, ceramics and artwork to furniture, textiles and glassware, there is a wide choice of products that demonstrates the talent of contemporary designers.

Local exhibitors include silversmith Edward Mahoney from Faversham, ceramicist Louise Hummerstone from Canterbury and Whitstable-based jeweller Teresa Samson, among many others. Visitors will have the chance to learn about how the items are made and find out what inspires these talented artists and craftsmen.

Craft in Focus runs from noon to 5pm on Friday and 10am to 5pm next Saturday and Sunday. Admission costs £4/£3 for adults and is free for accompanied under-14s. To find out more, call 01622 747325 or visit www.craftinfofocus.com.

THE GRANGE OPEN DAYS

Friday, April 9 to Monday, April 12
The Grange, Ramsgate

THE home of influential architect Augustus Pugin will open its doors to the public this weekend.

Pugin was a prolific 19th century designer and architect who designed interiors for the House of Lords and influenced the look of many Victorian buildings in Britain. The Grade I listed house is one of the very few domestic houses designed by Pugin and he built it as his own family home, railing against the contemporary trend for Georgian terraces.

During the open days, visitors will be able to see the private chapel and the library where Pugin worked on his designs for the House of Lords. Using fragments found during the restoration process, the house's ornate wallpapers were recreated and adorn the walls once again.

The Grange can be viewed from 10am to 4pm, Friday to Sunday and 10am to 1pm on Monday. The adjacent parish church will be open from 10am to 4pm on Friday, Saturday and Monday and 2pm to 4pm on Sunday. Admission is free and booking is not required. For details call the Landmark Trust on 01628 825925 or email bookings@landmarktrust.org.uk.





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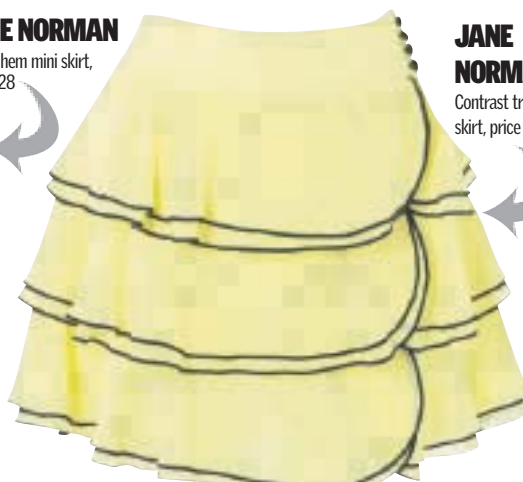
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MATALAN
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JANE NORMAN
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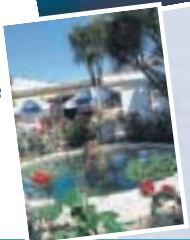
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EASY

	7	8				2		1
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EASY

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EASY

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		1	3						5
8		5				4		3	
9					7	1			
		9	1	7	2				
							6		
4	1					6			

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Body or just the heart, say (5)
4 Agree Ray was puzzled by unclear situation (4,4)
8 From birth to death, enjoyable period (4,2,4,4)
10 Lazy louse agitated ardently (9)
11 This man is on target (5)
12 One who is discovered? (4)
13 Strain placed on harbour in country with low duties (3,5)
17 Burdensome amount of drudgery perhaps (8)
18 Fat fashion leader has small party (4)
22 No end of good fortune concerning money (5)
24 Reserve some diamonds in fashion centre (9)
25 Dramatic lovers (5,3,6)
26 Duly tear round with grounds for divorce (8)
27 Hatter almost upset Greek character (5)

DOWN

- 1 Townsman takes article into Channel Islands on Buddhist (7)
2 Criminal sheep rustler (3-6)
3 Exact place ahead (4-2)
4 Game complaint (6)
5 Happening seven times a week as usual (8)
6 OK it is 100% correct (3,5)
7 Of little folk who are not completely self-indulgent (5)
9 Tub for breakfast cereal? (4)
14 He is a card (9)
15 Sad beautiful girl's said bloomer (8)
16 Hundred leaving transport replaced by thousand at the ceremony (8)
17 Kay, after breaking law, to go on foot (4)
19 Leaves complaint first about former medicinal drink (4-3)
20 Dull dog moving inside dirty place (6)
21 Discharge account and leave (6)
23 Some manic rowdiness coming from multitude (5)

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Cologne's river (5)
4 Zip-___ (8)
8 Revolving firework (9-5)
10 Frankness (9)
11 Early (anag.) (5)
12 Pour (4)
13 Largest of Shetland Islands (8)
17 Discovered (8)
18 Belch (4)
22 Even (5)
24 Town near Sevenoaks (9)
25 Under any circumstances (3,4,2,5)
26 Dark colour (4-4)
27 In front (5)

DOWN

- 1 Bat (7)
2 Throw in (9)
3 Nevertheless (4,2)
4 Monastery (6)
5 Bony (8)
6 Breathing out (8)
7 Each (5)
9 Poke (4)
14 Plenty (9)
15 Cold confection (3-5)
16 Feast (8)
17 Overcast (4)
19 Drunk (3-4)
20 Nap (6)
21 Ukrainian peninsula (6)
23 Pansy genus (5)

YOUR HOROSCOPE BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)

BEWARE of a tendency to spread yourself too thinly. There are plenty of opportunities ahead and you want to experience them all. Choose the path that affords the most intellectual stimulation. Although learning something new will be frustrating, it will be fun, too.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20)

YOU'RE determined to spend more time on spiritually fulfilling pursuits. Hanging out with friends is better than spending long hours at the office and of course your nearest and dearest are eager to see you. Heading out with a large group will put a big smile on your face.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



GEMINI (May 22-Jun 22)

A CULTURED, sophisticated colleague will try to introduce you to a new hobby. You'll meet a lot of interesting friends. As a general rule you like to learn a little about every subject possible, but right now you'll feel compelled to develop expert knowledge in a specialised area.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)

YOUR high ideals prompt you to make a brave move. Confronting someone who has abused their power will put you in a dangerous spot. Still, you're willing to risk everything for the sake of fairness. People admire your courage and may even get a crush on you as a result.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)

AN ATTENTIVE admirer is poised to wine and dine you. Although all this attention is flattering, it can be claustrophobic, too. Be sure to set aside some time for solitary pleasures. You're a lot more self-sufficient than you realise. Give yourself a chance to connect with your inner spirit.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21)

YOU'RE in the mood for fun, and why not? Recently you've been buried under a flurry of family responsibilities. Now you have a chance to get out and party. Join forces with a mischievous friend who likes getting in trouble. Together, you'll paint the town red.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)

YOU'RE in a good mood and feel excited at the prospect of starting a new job. This opening or opportunity will bring in lots of money, but more importantly it will give you a great deal of creative satisfaction. Trust your instincts when it comes to dealing with a counsellor.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21)

YOU'RE very impressive now, so be sure to surround yourself with positive, practical people. A wonderful job opportunity could become available. At first glance, this position will seem out of reach. With encouragement you could actually get an interview and make a great impression.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



CANCER (Jun 23-Jul 23)

AN EXCITING career opportunity is about to land in your lap. Although the interview process will be gruelling you owe it to yourself to give it your best shot. If you have a choice between working for a flat salary or earning a commission, choose the latter.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Cancer** 09067-531755



VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)

AN INTENSE relationship is getting even hotter. You feel inexplicably drawn to someone who makes you furious one minute and happy the next. In the past, you paired up with people who offered you safety and security. Now you're ready for a walk on the wild side.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)

LAUNCHING a spring cleaning project will keep you busy in the days ahead. Every once in a while you feel overwhelmed. When this happens, clear out your cupboards. Although you enjoy hanging on to old things, there's a difference between sentimental value and junk.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)

STRONG ties to family prompt you to cut back your work schedule. If you've been coping with a horrible commute, you may decide to open a home-based business. You have the makings of a successful entrepreneur, thanks to your past experience and common sense.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

Calls cost 75p per minute. Service provided by g8wave London N7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD & SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

CRYPTIC SOLUTION No130

ACROSS: 1 Impact 4 Smutch 10 Tricolour 11 Jaunt 12 Karachi 13 Sirocco 14 Storage heater 16 Put a foot wrong 21 Debauch 22 Horizon 24 Iraqi 25 Annabelle 26 Yelped 27 Etched.

DOWN: 1 Intake 2 Prior 3 Choicer 5 Majorca 6 Truncheon 7 Hatbox 8 Coming to a head 9 Cross-hatching 15 Thumbnail 17 Abusive 18 Rarebit 19 Oddity 20 Indeed 23 Zilch.

QUICK SOLUTION No132

ACROSS: 1 Past tense 8 Catherine-wheel 10 Unreserve 11 Layer 12 Team 13 Mithrandir 17 Detected 18 Bump 22 Level 24 Tonbridge 25 For love or money 26 Navy-blue 27 Ahead.

EASY

8	5	7	6	1	9	3	2	4
9	2	6	5	3	4	7	1	8
1	3	4	2	8	7	9	5	6
6	7	9	8	2	3	1	4	5
2	8	5	9	4	1	6	7	3
4	1	3	7	5	6	2	8	9
3	9	2	4	7	5	8	6	1
7	4	1	3	6	8	5	9	2
5	6	8	1	9	2	4	3	7

MEDIUM

1	3	4	8	5	7	6	9	2
6	8	2	3	9	4	1	5	7
5	9	7	1	2	6	4	3	8
9	1	5	7	6	2	3	8	4
3	7	8	4	1	5	9	2	6
4	2	6	9	3	8	7	1	5
2	5	3	6	4	1	8	7	9
8	4	9	5	7	3	2	6	1
7	6	1	2	8	9	5	4	3

HARD

4	9	7	5	6	1	3	8	2
1	3	2	8	9	7	5	4	6
6	8	5	3	2	4	9	7	1
8	1	4	2	7	9	6	3	5
2	7	6	4	5	3	8	1	9
3	5	9	1	8	6	7	2	4
5	4	1	6	3	8	2	9	7
9	6	8	7	4	2	1	5	3
7	2	3	9	1	5	4	6	8

yourweather

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TODAY'S FORECAST



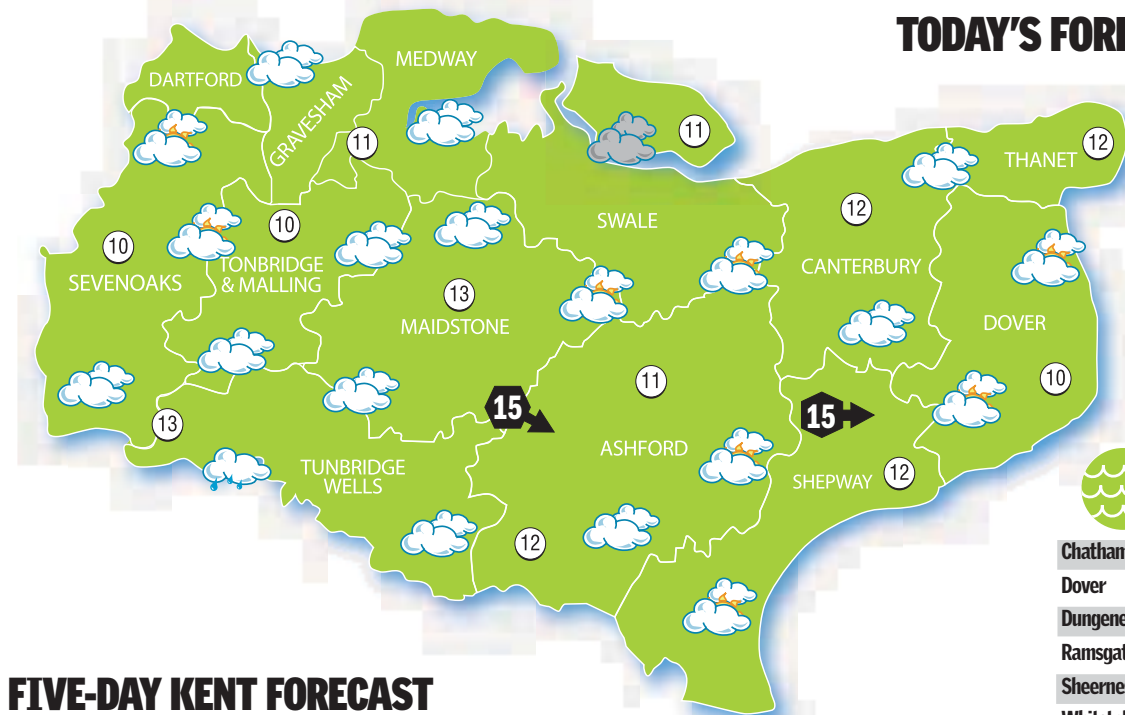
AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	9°C	Madrid	17°C
Athens	19°C	New York	21°C
Barcelona	14°C	Paris	13°C
Beijing	16°C	Rome	13°C
Bombay	36°C	Sydney	20°C
Cape Town	24°C	Tenerife	21°C
Cardiff	10°C	Tokyo	9°C
Gibraltar	16°C	Vancouver	13°C
Hong Kong	26°C	Warsaw	16°C
Las Palmas	21°C	Wellington	15°C



KENT'S WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Location	Day	Time	Height
Chatham	Saturday	11:14am	5.1m
Dover	Saturday	9:43am	5.5m
Dungeness	Saturday	9:23am	6.1m
Ramsgate	Saturday	10:13am	4.2m
Sheerness	Saturday	11:03am	4.9m
Whitstable	Saturday	11:10am	4.6m
Chatham	Sunday	12:00pm	5.4m
Dover	Sunday	10:24am	5.8m
Dungeness	Sunday	10:12am	6.5m
Ramsgate	Sunday	10:54am	4.4m
Sheerness	Sunday	11:49am	5.2m
Whitstable	Sunday	12:00pm	4.8m



FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	14°C	12°C	14°C	13°C	12°C
Canterbury	15°C	11°C	12°C	11°C	10°C
Chatham	13°C	11°C	12°C	10°C	9°C
Dartford	15°C	13°C	14°C	13°C	12°C
Dover	13°C	10°C	11°C	11°C	10°C
Faversham	13°C	11°C	12°C	10°C	9°C
Folkestone	13°C	10°C	11°C	11°C	10°C
Gillingham	13°C	11°C	12°C	10°C	9°C
Gravesend	15°C	13°C	14°C	13°C	12°C
Maidstone	15°C	13°C	13°C	14°C	12°C
Ramsgate	15°C	11°C	12°C	11°C	10°C
Rochester	13°C	11°C	12°C	10°C	9°C
Sevenoaks	13°C	11°C	12°C	11°C	11°C
Sittingbourne	13°C	11°C	12°C	10°C	9°C
Tonbridge	14°C	12°C	13°C	14°C	13°C
Tun Wells	14°C	12°C	13°C	14°C	13°C



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Dragon-training tale scales new heights in animation

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

ALMOST 10 years since Shrek emitted his first pungent burp, DreamWorks Animation soars to dizzying heights with a brilliantly-executed and deeply-touching story of one boy's friendship with a supposedly fearsome dragon.

Madagascar and Kung Fu Panda both lacked spark, but How To Train Your Dragon has invention and emotion in abundance, and will delight audiences of all ages with its lush visuals and smart script based on the book by Cressida Cowell.

Screening in 3D in selected cinemas and traditional 2D everywhere else, Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders' fantasy combines a traditional rites of passage drama with breathtaking action and uproarious comedy.

The eye-popping format works especially well during the vertiginous flying sequences – you feel like you can almost reach out and touch the clouds as human and beast soar through the air in perfect harmony.

The unlikely hero is a weedy Viking called Hiccup, who has been told his whole life that dragons are evil beasts that would eat a man as soon as look at him.

Consequently, Hiccup and the other children in the village grow up with a hatred of the creatures and dream of training for battle alongside their warrior fathers.

Alas, Hiccup is too feeble and his father, tribe leader Stoick, protects the youngster from harm by entrusting him to the care of burly blacksmith, Gobber.

"One day I'll get out there, because around here, killing a dragon is everything," bemoans Hiccup.

Gobber convinces Stoick that dragon training might give the boy some backbone.



EMOTIONAL: Hiccup the Viking forms a touching bond with Toothless the dragon after nursing him back to health

So Hiccup joins feisty Astrid, Fishlegs, Snotlout and the twins Ruffnut and Tuffnut in the ring, where they learn to cope with all manner of fire-breathing creatures.

But unbeknown to the other recruits, Hiccup has befriended an injured dragon – a mysterious Night Fury – and has nursed the creature back to health and even nicknamed him Toothless. As the bond between animal and boy deepens, Hiccup questions everything he has ever been told.

How To Train Your Dragon is a wonderful adventure for the entire family, underpinned by the bond between Hiccup and Toothless that develops organically as the two characters become accustomed to each other.

The freedom that the boy feels in the sky contrasts with his suffocation on terra firma.

Vocal performances are strong.

Actor Jay Baruchel milks every ounce of sympathy for young Hiccup as he tries to make everyone happy and become the Viking

that Stoick wants him to be. When Stoick inevitably discovers his son's betrayal and angrily disowns him – "You're not a Viking, you're not my son!" – there's a genuine lump in our throats, which we soon swallow when the script delivers yet another belly laugh before setting up the rousing finale.

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON Certificate PG



VIEW THIS PREVIEW



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yourkenttv.co.uk



YOUR TV REVIEW ASK THE CHANCELLORS: Channel 4, Thursday

■ BY JAMES ALEXANDRE

TELEVISION history is set to be made over the next few weeks with live election debates between the three main party leaders.

The deal was negotiated between the big three broadcasters, the BBC, ITV and Sky. However, not to be outdone, Channel 4 neatly added its own footnote by coming up with an exclusive Chancellors' Debate.

Not only was this a stroke of genius, considering how much of a key role the economy is going to play in voters' minds, but there were no rules to stifle it.

Unlike the prime ministerial debates, there were no pre-arranged time limits and the current incumbent Alistair Darling, together with his Tory and Lib Dem counterparts George Osborne and Vince Cable, were free to speak at length.

There was no blood on the carpet from a hoped-for knockout blow, but if anything, this

proved a positive advert for politics. It was polite, robust, succinct and engaging in equal measure and no doubt gave everyone extra food for thought come the expected May 6 polling day.

The Conservatives' Osborne probably had the most to lose as one of the perceived weakest links on the party's front bench, and was caught out on how he would reconcile proposed tax cuts with reducing the deficit.

But he was resolute about the Tories' latest policy decision, announced earlier that day, on reversing part of Labour's proposed national insurance rise, saying it would be bad for business and jobs.

Alistair Darling lost some credibility in suggesting that lower unemployment might avoid deep cuts in public spending, but challenged Osborne over narrowing tax credits.

The Lib Dems' Vince Cable received the most rounds of applause by reminding the audience he correctly predicted the economic meltdown and denounced the other two par-



GOOD-NATURED: Chancellor Alistair Darling debates the economy with Vince Cable and George Osborne

ties for being beholden to either militant unions or rich non-doms.

But he was inaccurate in his statement that every former building society had collapsed in the crisis, which those in the former Abbey National offices would take issue with.

But none of the more heated exchanges threatened to boil over and the three suited

men almost seemed to enjoy the novelty of standing behind their lecterns.

Krishnan Guru-Murthy did a competent job as the show's anchor and it was on the whole good-natured and informative, exactly what television executives should strive to achieve, rather than the mud-slinging and insult-throwing we unfortunately expect.

yourcompetition

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RUNNING a home isn't without its challenges. Ferrying the kids around, tackling that mountain of laundry and finding the time to do the weekly shop all take their toll, leaving you feeling frazzled and, if you're honest, sometimes just a little bit irritable.

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To enter, simply answer the question below and send your entry on a postcard along with your email address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to Cushelle Competition, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

The closing date is April 25, 2010.

No purchase necessary

Question: What is a baby koala called?

a) Puppy b) Joey c) Kitten

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If you do not wish to receive any literature please write 'no literature' on your entry.



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yourmusic

Ray joins all-star line-up at festival



MAIN SUPPORT: Former Kinks frontman Ray Davies joins Bob Dylan at the Hop Farm

■ BY JON COATES

FORMER Kinks frontman Ray Davies is the latest big name to be added to the bill of the Hop Farm Festival.

The singer-songwriter will be the main support to headliner Bob Dylan at the Paddock Wood event on Saturday, July 3.

Davies will head for the Hop Farm a week after playing Glastonbury Festival's pyramid stage.

The 65-year-old, who embarked on a successful solo career in the mid-90s and was awarded a CBE by the Queen for services to music in 2004, is best known for the classic hits he penned for The Kinks, including You Really Got Me, All Day and All of the Night, Sunny Afternoon and Waterloo Sunset.

English indie rock band The Magic Numbers and Northern Irish singer-songwriter Foy Vance have also been added to the Saturday bill of the festival.

The Magic Numbers, two brothers and two sisters who met at a Catholic school in Middlesex, have released two albums and supported Travis and Snow Patrol on tour.

Foy Vance, 35, from Bangor, County Down, released debut album Hope in 2007 and has a live EP out now of a performance with Ulster Orchestra at the Waterfront in Belfast.

The Saturday line-up now reads Bob Dylan, Ray Davies, Mumford & Sons, Seasick Steve, Pete Doherty, Laura Marling, The Magic Numbers, and Foy Vance.

The site off the A228 near Paddock Wood will open at 6pm on Friday, July 2, for anyone wanting to camp. There will be a small bill on the Friday night, which is yet to be announced.

Tickets, which cost £65 for the Saturday event, including car parking, and another £25 for the two nights camping and Friday bill, are on sale online at www.hopfarmfestival.com.

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Funk rockers Tokyo Jo



TOP FIVE KENT GIGS

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- 2 Craig Sheridan - Winter Sunn
- 3 CWB - Footsteps (from Canterbury)
- 4 Rogues Down - Poison Arrow (from Deal)
- 5 I.R.I.S - Thicker Than Water (from Deal)

The site will open for day ticket holders at 11am on the Saturday, with Dylan due to finish his headline set at 11.30pm.

Festival organiser Vince Power said: "For the third year there will be no sponsorship and branding, and no VIP area. We are trying to put the emphasis on the music."

Another event is being planned for Sunday, July 4, which will have a different type of bill. The line-up for this is due to be announced later this month.



EYE TO EYE: A polar bear gets up close and person with intrepid guests on the Tundra Buggy near Churchill in northern Canada

yourgetaways

We're going on a bear hunt in frozen wastes of Canada

■ BY EMILY BEAMENT

AFTER studying us carefully for several minutes to see if we might make a suitably tasty lunch, the giant bear finally lost interest in us, turned, and headed off across the snow.

"In the bear world, the bigger the bum, the better," explained our expert guide Patrick Rousseau.

It seems colder winters keep the ice frozen for longer periods, enabling them to eat more seals as the weather turns colder.

We're out on the tundra near Churchill, a village in northern Canada about 600 miles north of Winnipeg, and about 600 miles south of the Arctic Circle. It calls itself the polar bear capital of the world, and with good reason.

Getting here isn't easy. After an eight-hour flight into Winnipeg, a 20-seater plane takes you north over frozen wastes for another two hours.

Barely 1,000 people live in Churchill, but each autumn, hundreds of polar bears gather here on the shores of Hudson Bay.

It is not just their bottoms that are big. Polar bears are the world's largest carnivore found on land, and everything from their dinner-plate sized feet, to their highly-sensitive black noses, is absolutely enormous.

Males weigh 1,600lbs or more, but only when a polar bear rears up on its hind legs to look you in the eye do you realise how powerful and fearsome they are.

Luckily we were inside a 'tundra buggy' – a large, solid vehicle on six-foot-high tractor wheels once used to practise the invasion of Russia.

You can get a sense of the scale of the vast, cold wilderness on a heli-

FACT FILE: CANADA

Time difference	-3.5 to -8 hours (GMT)
Capital	Ottawa
Language	English and French
Population	34 million
Currency	Canadian dollars

Emily Beament travelled on 13-day Polar Bear adventure with Thomas Cook Tours and Canadian Tourism Commission, from £4,295. The package includes Air Canada international flights, door-to-door pick-up for travellers in the South East and regional connecting flights. Thomas Cook Tours reservations: 0844 871 5170 and www.thomascooktours.com. Further information is available on www.canadatourism.com.



copter trip, from which we spotted bears and other wildlife, including moose.

With Patrick, who worked as a wildlife biologist for the Canadian National Park Service for 34 years, sharing his knowledge, we gained a great insight into the life of bears.

Although they can look cute, they are 10 feet tall on their hind legs, and easily able to peek in through our driver's window.

One bear peered at us through the front windscreen, allowing us to see how they can wiggle their noses – which we were told can smell through six feet of ice, and pick up the scent of a seal five miles away.

And as for those big bums, Patrick told us the ice had lasted longer than normal in the summer, allowing them more time to feed, and the bears were in better shape than they have been for some time.

Life is more comfortable for the

human out-of-towners; we were chauffeured around the town in an old school bus for a history tour, a visit to the Eskimo Museum and a talk by local photographer and wildlife expert Mike Macri.

While we were out on the tundra all day – with picnic lunches on the buggy – hearty breakfasts and dinners were provided in town at Gypsy's restaurant, and there was even time to brave the cold for a bit of shopping in the gift shops.

Polar bears are not the only wildlife seen in Churchill, which is also home to Arctic and red foxes, birds such as ptarmigan and, in summer, beluga whales who venture up the Churchill river. You might even see the Northern Lights.

However, in the autumn, it is all about the bears, and I will never forget coming face-to-face with the most famous inhabitant of the increasingly-fragile Arctic.

MONEY MATTERS

A Newton's cradle with five metal spheres. The central sphere is in motion, having just struck or about to strike the others. The spheres are replaced by pound sterling symbols (£). The background is a dark blue gradient.

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Inside your pull-out supplement

- Help your tenants cut their costs
- Check your lease to avoid repair bills
- Passing on the business baton
- Your word is your bond – or is it?
- Getting the best car deal after Scrappage
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All tenants are looking for value for money and quality of service, and if landlords don't do their best to retain their loyalty, occupiers are likely to vote with their feet and move. In these difficult times we all need to make that extra effort to retain our core business.

As owners and managers of substantial business parks in the UK and the USA, we have considerable buying power. However, all landlords can make savings for their tenants. They should meet all their contractors to review existing contract terms, frequency of service, explore bulk-buying opportunities and renegotiate contractor profit margins. They should also research the best utility contracts on the market, which can vary considerably.

We have done all this at Kings Hill and renewed our contracts early to secure the best possible prices.

This saving can have a huge impact on businesses. It could mean that redundancies don't have to be made because the savings can cover salaries. It could free up funds for researching new markets or simply mean that businesses can stay afloat.

Responsible landlords will probably already have sought better deals for their 2010 service charge budgets. However, those occupiers who

Andrew Blevins, managing director of Kings Hill developer Liberty Property Trust UK Ltd, explains how landlords can help occupiers beat the recession by securing reduced service charges



SAVINGS: Liberty Property Trust at Kings Hill have reviewed their service contracts for 2010

feel that the service charges they are paying are too high should contact their landlord to see if reductions can be made in the 2011 budget rounds.

Typically, service charges are payable quarterly, with a reconciliation after year-end resulting in further payment or rebate. To ensure that the year-end resolution is dealt with fairly, tenants could seek the advice of a chartered surveyor who would assess the fair-

ness of the charges, ensure that the tenants are receiving what they are paying for and ensure the quality of provision.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors website provides guidance to landlords to ensure good practice prevails. Visit www.rics.org

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Richard Metcalfe of Metcalfe Stanley Hicks chartered building surveyors, warns businesses they may find themselves seriously out of pocket if they neglect a little-understood area of their leases



FOREWARNED: Chartered building surveyor Richard Metcalfe could save you money

Don't get landed with repair bill

EVERYBODY who leases a commercial property needs to understand that unless you take appropriate steps before signing the lease, you will be responsible for repairing the property before you leave, regardless of its condition when you first occupy it.

Failing to understand the terms of their lease and its obligations can leave many businesses facing substantial and unwelcome

costs at the end of their term. In the vast majority of cases it is the responsibility of the outgoing leaseholder to repair and reinstate the property before the end of the lease. In the absence of this, the leaseholder must compensate the landlord.

Getting the work done can be disruptive to the leaseholder's business and may force them to vacate early. Negotiating a financial sum with the landlord can be difficult and may involve substantial legal costs.

Chartered building surveyors work closely with legal advisors to negotiate the pitfalls of dilapidations, ensuring that their clients, be

they landlords or leaseholders, respectively maximise their gains or minimise their losses when buildings are being vacated.

Too often businesses believe that, as they are leasing rather than purchasing, there's no need for a building survey. This is a dangerous misconception and before signing any commercial lease you must obtain proper professional advice and quantify your liabilities.

As a lease nears its end, landlords also need to take appropriate legal advice and consult a chartered building surveyor. A Schedule of Dilapidations must be prepared and served on the lessee in good time and in sufficient detail

by an experienced chartered building surveyor practitioner.

If you are the prospective leaseholder the message is – forewarned is forearmed – consult your chartered building surveyor before you sign the lease, and again in the last year of the lease, so that you may plan your effective exit.

The key is not waiting until you receive a Schedule of Dilapidations from your landlord.

• **For more information or to contact Metcalfe Stanley Hicks, go to www.msh-cbs.co.uk.**

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Onward and

For many businesses at the moment, survival is the name of the game, but when the upturn comes the issue of succession will once again return to the forefront of many owners' minds. **Paul Saunders**, managing partner of Clydesdale Bank for Kent, believes that the sooner you start planning, the better the chances of a successful exit and succession



COMPANY owners often leave it too late when it comes to succession planning, increasing the potential for internal wrangling and disputes which can cause people to take their eyes off what's important – running the business.

At the heart of the problem lies the fact that, for many owners, there's seldom enough time to accomplish day-to-day tasks, let alone plan for something that could be years away. So, when should you start succession planning? For many, it's when they have successfully navigated the start-up phase and

are approaching maturity, which is a time when the business is secure enough to start planning a succession and, ultimately, an exit. Once the decision has been made, the business owner needs to carry through the process demonstrating that this is all about the long-term wellbeing of the organisation and its workforce.

If employees have any uncertainty over the future direction of the business, then they will develop their own exit strategy and with it the risk that the best will fly the nest. At best this would hinder the exit, at worst scupper the business. So clear communication with everybody concerned is vital.

A fundamental issue is: who should succeed? And if, after auditing the firm's own talent pool and mapping that against key

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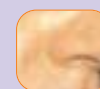
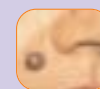
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upward as baton passes

positions, the right person, or persons, aren't to be found within the business, then the company needs to recruit them. Recruiting good people always pays dividends and is a key area of importance in succession planning.

Before succession, it's all about transition, and there's a need to actively develop longer-term successors by ensuring their careers progress and the range of work experiences that they, and the business, need for the future.

Fostering a corporate culture, which develops its workforce by sharing key skills, experiences and values, is important for any organisation. Investing time in developing family members, key employees, and management team members, and allowing them to exercise authority and control, will be vital to a successful succession.

With a transition plan and the right people in place, the actual task of selecting a successor becomes much easier. By empowering key members of the business, the selection process is simplified and the owners' exit options are broadened.

Once the decision as to who will succeed is made, the key task for the owner is communicating that plan, not just to the workforce, but beyond the business to customers, suppliers and advisers. This communication gives the successor and their colleagues a clear understanding of the path to the future and the different roles they are going to play in the journey. It also means everyone can focus on setting future goals and objectives for themselves and, importantly, the business.

An owner exiting a business also has signif-

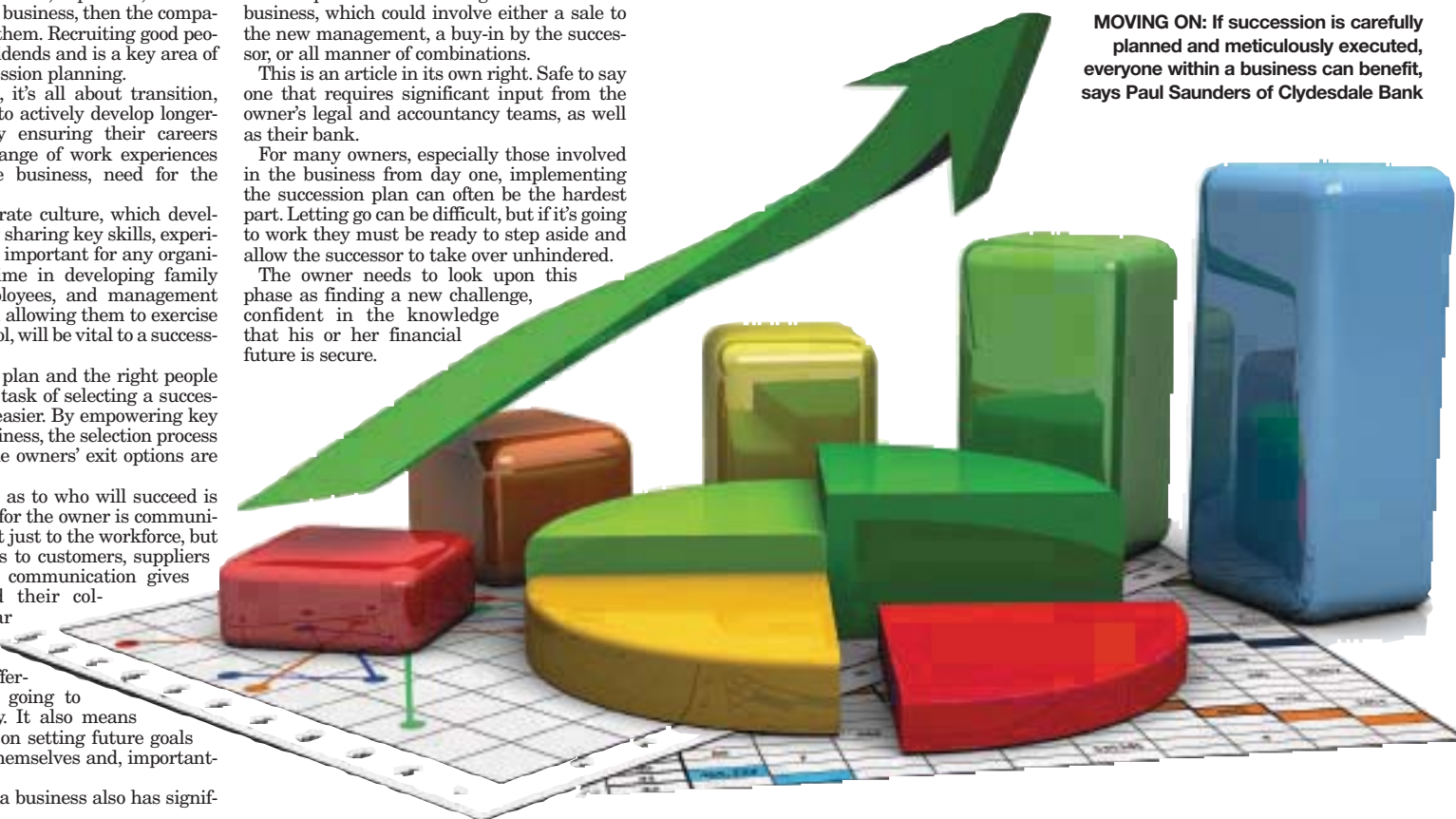
icant implications for the legal structure of a business, which could involve either a sale to the new management, a buy-in by the successor, or all manner of combinations.

This is an article in its own right. Safe to say one that requires significant input from the owner's legal and accountancy teams, as well as their bank.

For many owners, especially those involved in the business from day one, implementing the succession plan can often be the hardest part. Letting go can be difficult, but if it's going to work they must be ready to step aside and allow the successor to take over unhindered.

The owner needs to look upon this phase as finding a new challenge, confident in the knowledge that his or her financial future is secure.

MOVING ON: If succession is carefully planned and meticulously executed, everyone within a business can benefit, says Paul Saunders of Clydesdale Bank



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When trust is

Do you need a written contract to have a legally binding deal? The answer may surprise you, explains **Henar Dyson**, of Tunbridge Wells-based law firm Thomson Snell & Passmore

WHEN is a deal not a deal? Does a handshake or the undertaking of work represent a contract? Or do both sides need to have something in writing, signed and sealed, before it's official?

It's a thorny topic and one which continues to spark debate.

A recent article in The Times newspaper considered whether trust between contracting parties is an effective substitute for a contract.

The reality is that the law will imply contractual terms into any business arrangement, whether or not there is a written document.

There are also circumstances where a written contract is a legal requirement. The question, then, is whether parties can dispense with a fully-negotiated contract, where there is mutual trust.

Even lawyers will agree that contracts can take on a life of their own and become unwieldy. Word processing technology, an explosion of regulation in some areas and an increasingly litigious business environment have been largely responsible for this.

But is a negotiated contract a bad thing? There are good reasons for having one:

- It records what the parties have agreed, helping to avoid future argument;
- It apportions risk, making clear who pays if something goes wrong; and
- It will iron out the uncertainties of the general law position.

This said, there are obvious downsides to an overly-prescriptive contract. The costs of negotiation and dispute resolution can be huge. No contract can legislate for every eventuality, and this can lead to an unexpected result in court if an argument arises over circumstances that are not catered for in the contract.

International contracts present additional difficulties, where lawyers from different legal cultures try to devise a universal legal language. Also, the process of negotiation can result in a loss of trust between the parties.

Why contracts are necessary

Undoubtedly, no business arrangement can succeed without the parties trusting each other. In most cases, nor will it without a contract. There are many reasons for this:

- The basic reasons for negotiating a contract are still valid. This is not a question of lack of trust, but of practicality;
- It takes time to build up the necessary degree of trust, far more time than it takes to negotiate a balanced contract;

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simply not enough...



IT'S A DEAL: A handshake may suffice in smaller organisations, but where a high-value job is at stake, draw up a contract

- Where the power of the parties is mismatched, a negotiated contract will help the weaker party;
- High-level management does not have the time or necessarily the ability to resolve all disputes;
- Shareholders would be unlikely to support the company if they knew how potentially exposed it was.

Whilst contracts are still necessary, the level of detail in them is not always beneficial and

there are circumstances where this can and should be controlled.

For regular arrangements between the same parties, contracts can set out general principles, but need not be overly prescriptive. It is not uncommon for businesses to operate in this way.

For one-off arrangements or very high value transactions, this is not appropriate. The risks and the 'unknowns' are too high and too many. Consider also a smaller organisation, where

management knows and trusts its own staff. In those organisations, there may be scope for trust to replace a negotiated contract. In larger organisations, this is not feasible.

The production of an effective contract need not be time-consuming if clients agree terms before engaging lawyers and set a sensible timetable for concluding negotiations. The mark of a well-negotiated contract is that everyone sleeps well and the contract lives in a drawer, never to be seen again.

Essential guide to where you can save

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■ Stone Media Print in Ashford is offering a 2ftx8ft vinyl banner in full colour for £24.99 plus vat

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■ McCarthys Interiors in Broadstairs is offering 20 per cent off furniture, lighting, mirrors and home accessories

■ KOS Media offer, save £30 on the leader MD Electronic Typewriter only £169.99

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New wheel deals roll in as Scrappage is crushed

By **STEVE LOADER**

SCRAPPAGE may be dead, but keen new car deals live on in a much changed motor trade.

Half of the £2,000-a-time Scrappage grant for new car buyers part exchanging a 10-year-old (or more) banger came from car makers and dealers – some even threw in more cash to sweeten a deal.

It has made even the most conservative car buyer realise that list price didn't have to mean final price and it was worth haggling, especially with dealers just happy to survive the economic downturn.

Scrappage has also affected the used car market, because many so-called gas-guzzling bangers the Government hoped to take off the road were well cared for family motors with plenty of life in them.

Lots of real bangers are still out there, because their cash-strapped owners just can't afford to trade up at all – used or new.

Meanwhile, the cars that should never have gone to the scrapper – and dealers can tell heartbreaking stories of part-exchange Scrappage cars too young to die – were denied a new lease of life and the would-be buyers have been forced to move upwards in the used car market.



TEMPTING DEALS: Chevrolet's new Spark city car offers big car capacity within compact dimensions

This in turn has exacerbated a chronic shortage of used cars now, because fewer new cars were sold once recession loomed three or four years ago.

Prices have soared as a result and new cars start to look better value, especially when certain car makers are happy to 'buy' sales and market share with keen deals and low-rate finance just to keep their plants turning over.

Buyers may also be tempted because they

have cash earning little in a bank account, which could drive a deal on a new car instead. Before taking the plunge though, here are some do's and don'ts:

Don't be afraid to ask for trimmings like a tank of fuel, car mats or further discounts on extras.

Don't buy an unpopular engine or trim combination or a car on 'run-out' where production ceased a while ago – it might be just as thirsty

as your old car and will depreciate badly.

Do pick a model that saves fuel, insurance, road tax and depreciation – it won't get any easier out there.

Don't go for a knee-jerk disposal. A new car might still be expensive, even against running your gas-guzzler for the next three years.

Don't be blinded by tax-exempt diesel eco models – check price, running costs and green credentials against the standard version.

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Price of £6,945 relates to Spark 1.0. Vehicle shown is Spark 1.2 LT. Vehicle shown features metallic paint available at extra cost of £365. Available at participating retailers only. Not available in conjunction with any other offers. Available on UK supplied vehicles. Prices correct at time of press.

Official Government Environmental Data. Fuel Consumption Figures MPG (Litres/100 km). Chevrolet Spark range emissions: Urban 42.8 (6.6), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 55.4 (5.1), CO₂ Emissions 119 g/km.

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■ Fleecy Lined Wellies are only £29.99 including postage and packing with a KOS Media offer

■ Lexterten Furniture, Westgate on Sea, Thanet are offering £100 off elevating television cabinets

■ Northgate Alfa Car sales in Canterbury is offering fixed price servicing for cars for three years plus gold care for £169

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TAKE CONTROL: Driving more economically can add to the savings from eco-friendly models like the Vauxhall Insignia ecoFLEX, left, and new MultiAir version of the sporty Alfa Romeo MiTo.

Smarter driving – better saving

DOWNSIZING to a more fuel and tax-efficient car must be just part of your recession-busting motoring plan.

The next stage involves smarter driving and journey planning, and getting fitter by walking and cycling instead of using the car for short journeys – cold engines waste fuel and produce 60 per cent more emissions than warm ones. Short trips also mean more servicing and engine wear. A moped or motorcycle might be a better option. If you must drive, follow these tips from the Institute of Advanced Motorists and RAC Foundation:

- Plan your route to save strain on car and driver. Take the direct route – a sat nav can help – and go off-peak if possible. Commuters should think about car sharing, park and ride

bus schemes or other public transport.

- Have your vehicle serviced regularly.

Neglected engines waste at least 10 per cent more fuel and catalytic converters only clean emissions when properly maintained.

- Check your tyres. Under-inflated tyres wear faster, waste fuel, are dangerous and contribute to a growing environmental problem. Check tyre pressures weekly.

- Obey speed limits to save and stay legal.

Feather the throttle at cruising speed – 56mph uses 25 per cent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style saves fuel.

- Accelerate briskly without racing the engine – pulling away too fast uses up to 60 per cent more fuel. Intelligent gear changes at modest engine speeds can save up to 15 per cent in fuel.

- Reduce drag – remove roof racks and carriers when not in use and keep windows closed

to avoid drag and wasted fuel. Remove unnecessary and heavy boot luggage and wide wheels and tyres that add rolling resistance. Air conditioning costs fuel too, so try to use the fan and vents unassisted.

- Buy green fuel and use less. Look for low-sulphur 'city' diesel or cleaner petrol (low sulphur/aromatics). Consider converting to LPG (liquid petroleum gas) – half the price of petrol and with lower emissions.

- Think ahead – there is no point rushing and then having to brake suddenly.

- Be a tank miser. Why fill the tank to the brim and burn fuel carrying more weight than necessary?

- Stuck in traffic? Turn off the engine after two minutes to save fuel and emissions.

- **For more eco driving tips see Julie Maddocks' online video report at www.yourkenttv.co.uk/community.**

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Models shown have optional metallic paint available at an additional cost of £295. Prices shown are available on selected Retailer stock only, whilst stocks last and cannot be applied in conjunction with any other offer. *£2000 Government Scrappage Allowance is dependent on the vehicle meeting the full Government Scrappage incentive criteria. The Government Scrappage payment applies to vehicles registered on or before 31.03.09 when traded in against a new car subject to conditions. All offers available to private individuals, Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only). All other sales categories are excluded. Offers may not apply to all Retailer stock. Offers available at participating retailers only. UK, excluded vehicles only. *Incl. £2000 government allowance.

Motoring myths shattered

By **STEVE LOADER**

DON'T be suckered by costly motoring myths, says leading company car operator Lex Autolease.

The company runs some 300,000 vehicles for UK companies and has gathered driver feedback showing many bad habits derived from popular myths. The Lex myths hitlist includes:

- **Premium fuel is good for your car now and again**

It is only suitable for high performance cars – the higher cost is repaid by better mpg. Drivers using non-performance cars should stick to ordinary unleaded and diesel.

Another myth suggests supermarket fuel is poorer quality than that from oil companies' forecourts, but they often come from the same source, so you're paying more for the brand and any additives.

- **It's best to fit your new tyres to the front axle**

Actually, they should be fitted to the rear. More grip on the rear axle improves stability on slippery roads and could prevent a spin.

Drivers are also more used to worn tyres on the front, because most modern cars are front-wheel-drive and wear front treads faster than the rears. Switching part-worn rears to the front maintains a familiar balance.

- **Allow the car to warm up before driving off**

The engine will warm up faster, use less fuel and pump out less CO2 if you drive off immediately, rather than leave it to idle for a while. In winter, this also helps the car heater warm faster, though windscreens must be fully defrosted before setting off.

- **Running the tank near to empty helps to clean it**

Fuel tanks do not self-clean. It is more likely that you will misjudge your next fill up and risk seizing the engine or other components; driving with little or no fuel can be almost as damaging to a vehicle as putting in the wrong fuel. Fill up as quick-



HIT AND MYTH: The big-selling British-built Qashqai has killed Nissan's old reputation for boring cars

ly as possible when your warning light appears.

- **Filling up slows down your car**

Partially true. A heavy fuel load impacts upon fuel efficiency and braking distances, but acceleration and top speed is barely compromised by a full tank.

- **No-claims protection insurance protects my premium if I have a crash**

Standard insurances only protect the discount you would have received at the end of a claims-free year. If you have a

claim, insurance companies are liable to increase your overall premium, despite having a no-claims protection policy – you are now a classed as an increased insurance risk. Admittedly, the company has a vested interest in the final point:

- **Leasing is more expensive than buying**

Many businesses and motorists fail to properly calculate the true cost of ownership. List price alone is a red herring and ignores true running costs: finance, depreciation, maintenance and insurance. All such costs can be better captured and budgeted through a lease deal.

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MOTORS NEWS



Saab is bjorn again by Dutch saviours Spyker

REPORTS of Saab's rescue from shut-down had been long on Abba-esque 'Bjorn again' headlines and short on how the brand would advance in its new partnership with Dutch supercar maker Spyker.

But production has re-started at Saab's Trollhattan plant and the first vehicle off the line was an all-new 9-5 model; UK order books are open with prices from £26,495 with a generous standard spec. It was followed by a 9-3 Convertible – the other model tipped for a crucial role in the Saab revival.



Peugeot lion ready to go hunting for Audi TT

PEUGEOT launches its stunning new RCZ sports car in May, to take on yet undercut Audi's TT sports car icon.

It is a dream car at a near everyday price, selling in the UK for just £20,450 with lots of kit – Audi's cheapest TT is £6,000 more with rather less standard equipment. A classy interior highlights how far Peugeot's cabin trimming has advanced recently and the RCZ also draws attention to the French lion brand's ambitions to scale global motor rankings over the next few years.



New city car receives A1 for effort and style

AUDI is opening order books in May for its compact yet sleek and sporty three-door A1, targeting premium city car buyers.

Priced from £13,000, it comes with alloys, air con and electronic stability control, highlighting that people still want image and comfort even when downsizing. The A1 will be offered with petrol and diesel powertrains and is claimed to carry four people and their luggage.

However, it has to be more profitable for Audi than the innovative, but loss-making A2 of a decade ago.



COST CUTTER: Volvo's DRIVE offers low emissions and the Swedish firm's Start/Stop system which cuts the engine at lights or slow traffic and then fires up as the driver moves off

Start/Stop but it's all go with Volvo's eco saloon

ROAD TEST VOLVO S40 DRIVE

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

aerodynamics and tweaked powertrains and Volvo says it has even reviewed and cut energy used in production and recycling of its cars.

For an extra £250 on the S40 saloon line-up you can also specify the Swedes' Start/Stop system, which cuts the engine at the lights or when making slow progress in traffic and then smoothly fires it up again as the driver makes to move off – no thought is required.

Official figures show the system can boost average fuel use by as much as 10mpg above the standard DRIVE equivalent, which already delivers an impressive 62.8; the marque does not now bother with a 'standard trim' 1.6 diesel, which is a) as things should be now and b) stops motoring hacks highlighting how much a 'greener' model costs compared with a standard car. Start/Stop also knocks emissions back from 119g/km of CO2 to 104.

Rather than a hair shirt option, the DRIVE is a highly flexible family car and a driving pleasure too, despite revisions to the 108bhp diesel/six-speed gearbox powertrain and low rolling resistance tyres.

It even looks good, with Volvo's now distinctive scalloped rear wings and some smoothed alloys that further aid aerodynamics.



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What Car? magazine has given the new Superb Estate an excellent write-up in its first review, calling the car "big, comfortable, plush and fine value".

The magazine was particularly impressed by the value-for-money offered by the Superb Estate, saying it's, "cracking value and undercuts the equivalent Mondeo Estate by thousands."



Used Car Section

Skoda Octavia 2.0 T FSI vRS 5-Dr Hatchback Mar 2006

Black Metallic 43,200 miles * Manual Petrol £9,795

Skoda Fabia 2 1.4 TDI PD (80 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Satin Grey Metallic with a Grey Cloth interior, 25,300 miles. £8,795

Skoda Fabia 2 1.4 TDI PD (80 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback Jan 2008

Beige Metallic 24,700 miles * Manual Diesel £7,995

Skoda Fabia 1.4 16V Ambiente (75 HP) 5-Dr Estate Feb 2007

Brilliant Silver Metallic 22,473 miles * Automatic Petrol £7,495

Skoda Fabia 1 1.2 HTP 6V (60 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback Dec 2007

Brilliant Silver Metallic 11,572 miles * Manual Petrol £6,995

Skoda Fabia 1.4 Elegance (100 HP) 5-Dr Estate

Finished in Grey Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 41,628 miles. £6,795

Skoda Fabia 1 1.2 HTP 6V (60 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback Dec 2007

Beige Metallic 25,400 miles * Manual Petrol £6,795

Skoda Fabia 1.4 16V Comfort (75 HP) 5-Dr Estate Feb 2004

Graphite Grey Metallic 48,500 miles * Automatic Petrol £4,995

Skoda Fabia 1.4 Classic 5-Dr Estate

Finished in Red with a Black Cloth interior, 80,100 miles. £3,295

Skoda Octavia 1.4 Classic 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Silver Metallic with a Grey Cloth interior, 79,450 miles. £2,995

Other Makes
BMW 1 Series 1.6 116i ES 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Jet Black with a Black Cloth interior, 40,550 miles. £9,795

SEAT Toledo 1.9 TDI PD Stylance 5-Door Hatchback Sep 2006

Nayara Blue Metallic 20,695 miles * Manual Diesel £8,495

Vauxhall Astra 1.6 Club 16v 5-Door Hatchback Dec 2006

Silver Lightning Metallic 33,364 miles * Manual Petrol £6,995

Vauxhall Astra 1.8 16v Design 5-Door Estate Jan 2005

Metro Blue Metallic 29,700 miles * Automatic Petrol £6,495

SEAT Alhambra 1.9 TDI PD SE (130 BHP) 5-Door MPV Nov 2003

Pearl Blue Metallic 92,500 miles * Manual Diesel £6,295

SEAT Ibiza 1.2 12v Reference Sport 3-Door Hatchback Apr 2007

Black Magic Metallic 40,055 miles * Manual Petrol £6,295

Vauxhall Zafira 2.0 DTi 16v Design 5-Door MPV

Finished in Moonland Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 38,900 miles. £5,495

Vauxhall Astra 1.8 Life 16v 5-Door Hatchback Jan 2005

Metro Blue Metallic 67,500 miles * Automatic Petrol £4,995

Citroen C3 Pluriel 1.6 2-Door Cabriolet Jan 2004

Artic Steel Metallic 86,467 miles * Manual Petrol £4,495

Fiat Multipla 1.6 100 16v ELX 5-Door MPV

Finished in Antarctic Blue Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 68,900 miles. £4,995

Vauxhall Agila 1.0 Expression 5-Door Hatchback Aug 2006

Royal Blue Metallic 17,376 miles * Manual Petrol £4,295

Suzuki Wagon R 1.3 GL 75 BHP 5-Door Hatchback Mar 2002

Bright Red 39,350 miles * Manual Petrol £3,995

Ford Ka 1.3 3-Door Hatchback

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Renault Scenic 1.6 Expression + 5-Dr Hatchback Apr 2001

Norse Grey Metallic 71,500 miles * Automatic Petrol £2,795

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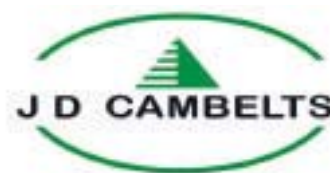
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Our website has over 1000 visits each day, and as well as a description of your vehicle, we can now include photographs.

To book your vehicle in instantly on the internet, simply visit our website at www.hobbsparker.co.uk and click on "Car Auctions", then click on "Add Vehicle to Sale List".

As well as our usual opening times, we shall be open from 3.00pm to 7.00pm Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd May to take entries.

Regrettably no entries will be accepted on the sale day. All start times are approximate and the auction will run continuously.

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PROPERTY NEWS

Lenders ready to be flexible as confidence rises

A GREATER amount of confidence in the property market is leading to increased flexibility among mortgage lenders, according to analysts.

First-time buyers could find higher loan-to-values being offered, said Ben Wilkie, editor of What Mortgage.

Bigger banks are likely to be the ones opening up their finances, he suggested, as they want to get back into the property market to boost their profile.

"It really should help first-time buyers because even to get a ten per cent deposit is hard enough – and to get any higher than that is outrageous for many people," he said.

For first-time buyers really struggling to save money, the expert predicted that a 95 per cent loan-to-value mortgage could be on offer "fairly soon".

Figures from Moneyfacts have revealed that 1,798 mortgage deals were on offer at the beginning of March requiring deposits of up to 40 per cent, up more than six per cent on the previous month.

Insurance vital for self-builders

PROFESSIONAL indemnity insurance is vital for those dealing with architects as it protects home-owners from the costs incurred from setting right any mistakes, experts say.

Julian Owen, chairman of the Association of Self Build Architects, said that it was rare for things to go seriously awry, but when they did the costs could be significant.

He said: "It is not like you can put that down to experience – this is your house we are talking about, so you have got to have that security."

Mr Owen advised home-owners to agree a set budget with the architect prior to the work beginning, so that any later disputes were avoided.

If this early agreement is made, then it is up to the architect to stick to budget or call the homeowner when it is being exceeded.

ASBA is Britain's biggest network of practising architects specialising in the design of individual houses, refurbishments and extensions.



Stamp duty cut brings headache for solicitors

■ BY NICK AMES

FIRST-time buyers have received a leg up on to the property ladder for the next two years as the stamp-duty threshold has been increased from £125,000 to £250,000.

Chancellor Alistair Darling said that the decision to raise the threshold for first-time buyers would result in nine in ten not paying any stamp duty.

He added that the increased allowance was to be funded by an increased stamp-duty level to five per cent from four per cent on properties worth more than £1 million.

The stamp-duty holiday is only available to first-time buyers.

Experts say this may cause difficulties for conveyance solicitors responsible for levying the tax.

There is expected to be an element of self-declaration, which will then have to be verified by checking the Land Registry.

Mike Warburton, of accountants Grant Thornton, said: "This is the first time that a tax has been based on personal circumstances of a first-time buyer rather than the value of the property."

"This will create a minefield for solicitors who will have to check if the house-buyers have bought property before."

If a property is being bought by more than

one individual, all of the buyers have to be first-time buyers to qualify for the stamp-duty holiday.

"The move will undoubtedly help many people achieve home-ownership and we need only look at the recent extension to £175,000 for proof of this."

"Of course, the devil is in the detail and policing this may prove to be a tricky task," said Drew Wotherspoon, of mortgage-broker John Charcol.

The news will boost the market as analysts say some UK residents now reach their 30s before they can afford to get on the ladder.

The average person struggles to find the required deposit, which can now hit 25 per cent of the house value, said Jane Marr, director at the Little House Company.

"I can foresee the situation where people in their 20s do not consider home-ownership and that it will only become a realistic goal once in your 30s as your pay increases and you have had longer to save," she said.

Figures from Rightmove revealed that the proportion of first-time buyers looking to purchase fell to 25.8 per cent, the second successive quarterly fall.

In a healthy housing market, this figure would be expected to be about 40 per cent.

The number of first-time buyers has slumped in recent years.

In 1999, more than 590,000 people took their first step on to the property ladder, but by the peak of the market in 2007, the figure had fallen to 357,000. Last year, it was just 198,000.



BUDGET: Chancellor Alistair Darling cut stamp duty

How to cash in while the sun's shining

THERE are no good arguments against having solar panels installed in the home, according to one expert.

Environmental homes expert Tim Pullen says that solar panels work and they do not need much attention from the home-owner for some 25 years of use.

He said that the first step home-owners should take to make their homes more environmentally friendly was to look at the walls of the property, as this is where 35 per cent of heat was lost.

Mr Pullen reckons that having cavity-wall insulation is a good idea if the homeowner has a decent cavity but if they do not then it is not such a positive step.

He added that the Government's planned introduction of feed-in tariffs was likely to encourage homeowners to think about the benefits of adopting the technology.

The scheme could see homes with solar panels being rewarded with up to £900 and an annual reduction of £140 on electricity bills, according to the Department of Energy and Climate Change.



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CENTRAL, HERNE BAY £187,500

Vacant end of terrace Victorian house close to all amenities just off the High Street and sea front. Features gas central heating, double glazing.



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Situated in the corner of a cul-de-sac this four bedroom detached property offers spacious family accommodation. Herne Primary School is about a mile away.



HERNE, HERNE BAY £330,000

This well presented three bedroom bungalow is situated in the sought after village of Herne. Within 1/2 a mile of Herne Primary School and the village centre.



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Aylesham OIEO £145,000

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Chartham, £229,950

This property in our opinion is decorated to a high standard and consists of an entrance hall, downstairs wc and kitchen/diner. The first floor offers a lounge with Juliet balcony, bedroom three and family bathroom.
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Faversham, £167,000

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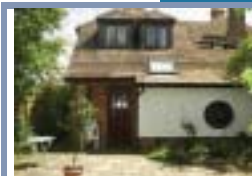
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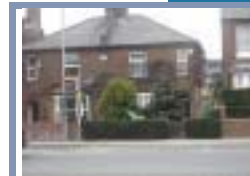
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Closing date: Wednesday 21st April 2010

MidKent College is working in partnership with RBLI Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the
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PUBLIC NOTICES

The Tankerton Wine Room Ltd has submitted to Canterbury City
Council, Military Road, Canterbury – www.canterbury.gov.uk an
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may be inspected at the Council offices during normal office hours.
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NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT Mr Murat Bicer has applied to the
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A register of licensing applications can be inspected at
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Any person who wishes to make a representation in relation to this
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The public register where applications are available to be viewed by
members of the public can be accessed online by visiting at
www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road,
Canterbury Kent CT1 1YW City Council and following the links.
The Council will not entertain representations where the writer
requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all
representations will be included in the papers presented to the
Licensing Panel and will therefore pass into the public domain.
Representations must relate to one of the four Licensing Objectives:
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Picture ADY KERRY



TARGET: Jenny Hall scored twice for England under-21s

Happy Easter for young guns on England duty

JENNY Hall and Lucy Hyams were both on target for England's youth sides over the Easter weekend.

The Canterbury ladies pair were in action a week after helping their club side to a top-five finish in the Premier Division.

Hall was in France with the under-21s, while Hyams was in a four nation under-16 tournament in the Netherlands.

Hall got England under-21s' three-game series against their hosts in Lille off to a flying start, scoring twice in a 4-0 win on Good Friday.

A 7-1 victory followed on Saturday, before

HOCKEY

completing a whitewash with a 6-0 win on Easter Sunday.

The under-16 girls were in action in Leusden, but began their tournament badly with a 6-1 defeat to the home side.

The inexperienced side trailed 4-0 before Hyams pulled a goal back at a penalty corner, but it could not prevent a heavy defeat.

A tight game with Spain followed and again the Canterbury teenager got on the scoresheet. The second-half strike could not

prevent another loss, this time finishing 3-2.

The side's fortune turned in Sunday's third game, when a penalty stroke from Hyams nine minutes from time gave England a 1-0 win against Germany.

Elsewhere, Canterbury's post-season fixtures later this month have been confirmed.

The ladies visit University of Birmingham on Saturday, April 24, with the winners going on to visit Leicester in the play-off semi-finals a day later.

The men will play three games over the Bank Holiday weekend in May to decide who wins promotion to the Premier Division.

RUGBY

Picture IAN KUPCO



HIT: Canterbury's Mike Melford braces for impact

Late show flatters to deceive city win

Canterbury 27 Barnes 12

A LATE flourish from Canterbury saw them eventually run out comfortable winners, but they were made to work hard for the points by relegation-bound Barnes.

Saturday's game looked to be heading for a tight finish, but youngsters George Bertolis and Max Cantwell scored tries in the last nine minutes to earn Canterbury a bonus point.

Head coach Danny Vaughan was again forced to reshuffle his squad after more fitness problems. Pat Sykes failed to recover from a knee problem which saw veteran Andy Pratt rushed into service.

Within a quarter of an hour Canterbury lost another key player when Rob Keir broke his arm, which will keep him out for the rest of the season.

Barnes came into the game knowing they had to win to keep their fading survival hopes intact and they got off to a promising start, scoring a converted try inside four minutes.

The hosts gradually eased their way into the game. They had one try disallowed for a knock-on, but Jack Davis soon got them on the board when he finished off an incisive move.

A Gert De Kock penalty edged the home side in front, but a second Barnes try restored their lead and they went in at half-time 12-8 ahead.

A superb try from Tom Best early in the second-half put Canterbury back in front, but a missed conversion meant their advantage was just a single point.

Barnes dictated the game for long spells but lacked the cutting edge to score as Bertolis and Cantwell rubbed salt in the wounds with tries which flattered the hosts.

Canterbury are not in action this weekend. Their next game is at home to Richmond on Saturday, April 17.

PLEASE SEND YOUR SPORTS STORIES TO SPORTS EDITOR GLENN PEARSON AT
glenn.pearson@kosmedia.co.uk



CRICKET

■ BY GLENN PEARSON

KENT'S newest bowling recruit is looking to prove he can cut it in county cricket after signing a two-year deal to help boost the club's threadbare seam department.

The county expressed their interest in signing South African-born seamer Dewald Nel when they discovered more than a month ago that Stuart Clark wasn't a realistic option due to fitness concerns.

County coach, Paul Farbrace, met with Nel and invited him to a trial at St Lawrence where he did enough to impress skipper Rob Key and senior players Martin van Jaarsveld and Geraint Jones, to earn himself a contract.

The 29-year-old qualifies for Scotland through residency having lived in Edinburgh for 13 years and has played 18 One-Day Internationals and 10 Twenty20 games for his adopted country.

Nel has experience of playing county cricket after a spell with Worcestershire in 2007, but was released after a handful of games in his one summer with the Midlands county.

Clearly disappointed at not getting enough of an opportunity at Worcester, Nel is confident he can do a job for Kent and prove he is a county standard bowler.

"I'm very excited to be at Kent and it's nice to get back in to county cricket," he said.

"I was made aware the club were after a seamer to get their bowling stocks up, so coupled with the fact I thoroughly enjoyed Kent as a place whenever I have played there, playing for Kent was very appealing."

The county are banking on Amjad Khan and Robbie Joseph spearheading their attack and hope an overseas bowler – should they get a work permit in time to play for the first half of the summer – will provide the firepower in the seam department, backed up by Nel and the ever dependable Simon Cook.

The Kent coach likens Nel to the evergreen Simon Cook who proved his worth to the side last season with 34 wickets after being sensibly recalled to the championship side, having been restricted to limited overs cricket only in the 2008 season.

Nel hopes to follow in Cook's footsteps and earn himself a contract extension at the end of the summer.

"When you go into a team you have some idea of what they expect from you and I hope to deliver for them," he said.

"My strengths are in running in and hitting the pitch hard, back of a length. Simon Cook is



NEW BOY: Kent skipper Rob Key was among senior staff who were impressed by Dewald Nel during a pre-season trial

known for his accuracy, so to be put in the bracket of someone of that calibre is a nice thing, hopefully I can live up to that.

"One of my goals this season is to get my contract extended beyond the two years I signed for. I would love to stay and spend my time playing cricket at the highest level I can."

The Klerksdorp-born cricketer, who was schooled at Edinburgh University after moving to Scotland in 1997, was one of just three players to earn a full-time contract with Scotland last year.

As the country's premier seamer, Scotland



Picture PA HOTOSADY KERRY

will recall Nel for several games this summer affecting his availability for his new county.

He said: "I think Kent and Scotland have come up with an agreement to release me for two One-Day Internationals against England and Bangladesh as well as the Inter-Continental competition – which we are top of the table – and there are two games left of that tournament."

"After that it will be on a month-by-month basis and depends on my involvement with the first-team, because it would be better to play for Scotland if I am not included in the Kent side."

Mind games playing part in Town's relegation woes

FOOTBALL

BY DAVID PRITCHARD

Whitstable Town 0



Godalming Town 3



WHITSTABLE Town caretaker manager Mark Lane believes his side need a tougher mentality if they are to avoid relegation.

The Oystermen slipped to the foot of the Ryman South on Saturday following a 3-0 defeat at home to promotion-chasing Godalming Town. After an evenly contested first-half, the home side collapsed after conceding the first goal and went on to lose for the sixth time in seven games.

Lane admitted: "I think they're so used to losing that when a goal goes in it affects them."

"From my point of view I have to motivate them so when it's 1-0 they try and nick a goal."

"I've looked at the stats and if we have scored first this season we invariably go on to win, but at the moment if we go behind it's unlikely we're going to get anything from the game. We're not very good at clawing back points, we tend to either win or lose."

Both sides went into the crucial Easter games desperate for points at opposite ends of



Picture PER LAUREN

DENIED: Stuart Vahid felt he should have had a penalty

the table. Despite the gap between the sides there was little to choose between them in a first-half high on effort, but low on quality. Neither goalkeeper had much to do before the break, with clear-cut chances at a premium.

Godalming came out with fresh impetus after half-time and took the lead on 55 minutes when the Whitstable defence allowed them too much time and space in the penalty area.

The home side thought they had earned a lifeline when Stuart Vahid fell when through on goal, but the referee waved away appeals for a penalty.

Whitstable Town starting XI



Subs used: Cory (Stubbs 55), Dalton (Gooding 75)

The hosts were then furious when Godalming were awarded a spot kick shortly afterwards to make it 2-0. Steven Lloyd's own goal late on sealed another defeat.

Lane remained philosophical and preferred to look for positives in a daunting fixture list which includes hosting title-chasing Folkestone Invicta this Saturday.

He said: "Dave Cory assured me he was pushed over in the box as well."

"If you get awarded them you take it, but the problem is people get frustrated when they go against you. They feel aggrieved, but the referee's not going to change his mind."

"The one thing is we have a couple of derbies against other Kent sides still to come. The lads know a lot about these teams and some have played for them in the past."

"Against Ramsgate [1-0 win last month] they lifted themselves for it and I'm expecting the same reaction against Folkestone."

The Oystermen were in action at play-off chasing Sittingbourne last night. Log on to www.yourcanterbury.co.uk for the details.

FOOTBALL



Picture KOB KIPPO

DETERMINED: Bay boss Simon Halsey

Bay keep pressure on Faversham after two vital wins over Easter

Herne Bay 1 Erith & Belvedere 0

HERNE Bay kept their Kent League title hopes alive thanks to a late goal from Stuart King which saw off a hard-working Erith & Belvedere on Easter Monday.

Simon Halsey's side looked in danger of dropping a costly two points as the visitors frustrated them for long spells. The breakthrough finally came ten minutes from time, when Stuart King lashed home from eight yards when the ball broke loose at a corner.

Bay enjoyed a Good Friday as they won 2-1 at Holmesdale and Kent League leaders Faversham Town lost at home to Beckenham Town.

A groin strain kept goalkeeper Dan Eason out, so Shaun Smith retained his place after starting the 2-2 draw with Erith Town last Monday.

The stopper had little to do early on, but stood no chance when Nathan Bell let fly to give Holmesdale the lead on 26 minutes.

Bay finally spluttered into life and found an equaliser just before half-time, when James Turner finished coolly.

The visitors received news of Faversham's defeat at the break, but manager Simon Halsey preferred not to tell his players for fear of putting too much pressure on them.

Much improved after the interval, Bay steadily increased the pressure on their hosts and made the breakthrough midway through the half. Luke Harvey tried his luck from long range with a shot which caught out the goalkeeper and flew into the net.

Smith then took centre stage, making a string of crucial saves in the closing minutes as Holmesdale searched for an equaliser.

Halsey, whose side took six points from six over Easter, said: "I've said all along you don't know how important Beckenham away [on April 24] might be. It could be a great end to the Kent League season."



Pictures DAVID MULLANEY

STALEMATE: Canterbury keeper Paul Hyde (left) was taken off early with a facial injury and despite the second-half introduction of Renford Tenyue (right), City failed to score

Boro put paid to Canterbury's title dreams

CANTERBURY City's faint County League title hopes were almost certainly extinguished after they failed to overcome struggling Lewisham Borough on Saturday.

City created plenty of chances, but finished poorly leaving the game not lacking in effort, but without any spark of originality.

Almost from the start a draw seemed the most likely outcome.

City lost goalkeeper Paul Hyde with a facial injury after only ten minutes, leaving Giga Zulmalashvili to take over.

Hyde had only just kept Lewisham at bay when he had to come to the edge of the penalty area to cope with a high bouncing ball. A Lewisham striker arrived at the same time

FOOTBALL

Canterbury City 0 Lewisham Borough 0

and in the collision, Hyde lost a front tooth, which was found and taken to hospital along with its owner.

City found Lewisham tough to break down and their only notable opportunities in the first-half came from a Dave Read header over the bar and a shot wide from Royston Gough.

Lewisham then scored, but were furious to see it ruled out after Zulmalashvili, a City defender and a Lewisham attacker all met the ball in the air at the same time.

If it was a let-off for the hosts it was balanced

when, later, they appeared to have a penalty appeal turn away.

The only player in the whole game to make a real difference to the stalemate was Renford Tenyue who came on after 65 minutes. His speed and deft control had the left side of the Lewisham defence in a panic.

City were much the more forceful side over the last 20 minutes, but up front nothing came off.

Gough curled a shot which the goalkeeper just managed to hold on to, while Tenyue attacked down the wing, only to be blocked by the keeper as he tore into the penalty area.

City host title hopefuls Hollands & Blair at Hersden this Saturday, kick-off 2.45pm.

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